

## **Legislative Update** by Mary Wilson

Members of Protect Our Pollinators and the Pollinator Pathway worked hard this session of the General Assembly on a bill to eliminate two pesticides through support of SB120 which would 1) eliminate the use of chlorpyrifos on Connecticut golf courses, and 2) eliminate the use of neonicotinoids by certified pesticide applicators (including lawn care professionals) effective October 1, 2022. Both of these pesticides, as per current use, are cosmetic in nature. Also, for both of them viable alternatives exist.

Chlorpyrifos, an organophosphate insecticide, had been banned by EPA for agricultural uses in August of 2021 due to its very serious effects on children's brain development as well as other health concerns. But use on golf courses continued as it had for many years to control insects such as sod webworms, cutworms, cinch bugs etc. However, the Golf Course Managers Association did not oppose the bill, probably because a shift had already started to a newer chemical alternative. Thus, the ban on chlorpyrifos was passed on May 5, the last day of the legislative session.

The fate of the neonicotinoid section of the bill was not so fortunate. Although the bill sailed through the Environment Committee and the Legislative Commissioner's Office, the Senate amended the bill by creating a working group consisting of DEEP, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the Connecticut Grounds Keepers Association, the Connecticut Pest Control Association, the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents, Friends of the Earth, Pollinators Pathway, and the Connecticut Beekeeper's Association. This group would meet and make a determination by January 1, 2023. However, when the amended bill got to the House on the very last day of the session, result of last minute discussions was to eliminate the neonicotinoid section of the bill altogether. Thus, there will be action on neonicotinoids this year.

As disappointing as this is, we are aware that the issue gained much attention and was widely supported by the public and many in the legislature. We should be in a good position for 2023's session. Thanks to all who may have called your legislators and/or supported this effort in any way. We are also grateful to the strong leadership in the Environment Committee and also our own representatives, Mitch Bolinski and Tony Hwang for their support.