

## Press Release

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# New York Kids and Support Groups Say "Thank You" to Albany Lawmakers

*Broad coalition of children's health organizations express strong support for new legislation on pesticides at schools.*

(Albany, NY) On behalf of the children of New York State, a coalition of more than twenty non-profits representing all the major environmental and children's health organizations in the state is publicly expressing its gratitude to the lawmakers of New York for their efforts to protect children from exposure to toxic pesticides used on lawns and playing fields. A new law prohibiting the use of turf pesticides, passed by the legislature and signed last year by Governor Paterson, goes into effect tomorrow at all schools in New York State, and a giant "Thank You" card is being delivered to every lawmaker in Albany today to celebrate the occasion.

*"Lawmakers in Albany are used to hearing people complain," says Patti Wood, Executive Director of Grassroots Environmental Education ("Grassroots"), an environmental health non-profit that spearheaded the "Thank You, New York" campaign. "This is a great opportunity for those of us concerned about environmental toxins and their impact on children's health to thank our elected officials for taking a stand on this important issue."*

The historic legislation, the first of its kind in the nation, prohibits the use of chemical pesticides on open spaces and playing fields at all schools, public and private, from kindergarten through 12th grade. Day care centers are also covered by the legislation.

### **A Win-Win, Money-Saving Law**

Last year, Grassroots produced a white paper demonstrating that over a five-year period, natural turf management programs cost considerably less than chemical programs. To help schools make the transition to natural programs, Grassroots conducted natural turf training programs for school turf managers at nine locations across the state at no cost to taxpayers or participants. The report and the free training were cited by many legislators as helping convince them to support the legislation.

Evidence linking pesticide exposure to serious health problems, especially in children, together with new evidence that chronic, low-level exposures are more harmful than previously believed, helped spur the legislation. However, supporters are concerned that information about the new legislation and the options for natural turf management may not have reached every school district.

*"Our legislators have taken the first step" says Wood. "Now its up to parents and administrators to see that schools are complying with this new law."*

### **"Thank You, New York" Partners**

Joining Grassroots in the "Thank You, New York" campaign are the American Lung Association; Audubon New York; New York State Breast Cancer Network; New York League of Conservation Voters; Citizens Campaign for the Environment; National Resources Defense Council; New York State United Teachers; New York State Parent Teachers Association; New York League of Women Voters; Federated Conservationists of Westchester County; Environmental Advocates of New York; the New York State Association of School Nurses; Riverkeeper; New York Public Interest Research Group; Healthy Schools Network; Clean New York; Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter; Green Schools Coalition; Center for Health, Environment and Justice; Empire State Consumer Project; Learning Disabilities Association of New York; and WE ACT for Environmental Justice.

***An electronic version of this press release, and a hi-resolution version of the "Thank You, New York" poster are available at [www.grassrootsinfo.org/news.html](http://www.grassrootsinfo.org/news.html)***

### **About Grassroots**

*Grassroots Environmental Education is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization based in Port Washington, New York. Grassroots educates the public about the links between common environmental exposures and human health, and the seeks to empower individuals to act as catalysts for change within their own communities. Grassroots has been recognized by the U. S. EPA for several of its innovative programs, including The ChildSafe School, How Green Is My Town and the Grassroots Healthy Lawn Program. More information is available on the organization's web site, [www.GrassrootsInfo.org](http://www.GrassrootsInfo.org).*