



NOFA/Mass
Northeast Organic Farming Association
Massachusetts Chapter

Growing a Healthier Future for Massachusetts

NOFA/ Massachusetts

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Re: Support for H.4481, "An Act authorizing the town of Orleans to adopt a pesticide reduction bylaw"

May 8, 2024

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

The Massachusetts Chapter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA/Mass) has long advocated for the reduction in use of harmful pesticides in our Commonwealth. Pesticide use for any purpose threatens drinking water aquifers, particularly for the communities on Cape Cod. Water supplies on the Cape, with its sensitive aquifer, are already threatened by multiple human sources of toxic chemicals. Local communities should be empowered to prevent pesticides (as well as fertilizers) from exacerbating this contamination.

Bill H.4481, "An Act authorizing the town of Orleans to adopt a pesticide reduction bylaw" would allow the town of Orleans to restrict non-agricultural outdoor uses of pesticides, particularly those used for landscaping and right-of-way maintenance. An analysis of MDAR reporting data for 2023, conducted by the MA Chapter of the Sierra Club, indicates that the outdoor non-agriculture segment accounts for 81% of pesticide usage in the state.

There is also significant concern on the Cape and across the state about the harms from specific pesticides, including the use of glyphosate for right-of-way maintenance and Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs). Right-of-way issues have resulted in years of protest, lawsuits, and the filing of bills in past legislative sessions. As you are aware, rodenticides are the subject of home-rule petitions from two municipalities in the Boston area (S.2448 and H.804) which were reported favorably by this committee. We commend the Joint Committee for seeing the necessity of these measures and hope you will similarly advance H.4481.

We further commend the committee for advancing H.874, "An Act regulating the application of fertilizer used in the town of Orleans," which would grant the town of Orleans local control over non-agricultural fertilizer use, addressing another significant threat to the local water supply. We now ask that you favorably report H.4481 and give the town of Orleans the ability to protect their fragile ecosystem from pesticides.

Thank you for considering this request. As always, please get in touch if we can help in any way.

Respectfully,

M. Dagoberto Driggs
Senior Policy Advisor