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Dear Shrewsbury Town Meeting Members:

The Massachusetts Chapter of the Sierra Club has been actively supporting efforts to curb the use of pesticides across the state. The goal of this campaign is to reduce exposure of toxics to humans and wildlife and keep toxics from accumulating in our environment.

The Massachusetts Sierra Club endorses your proposed Article 20. The proposed by-law is based on other legislation from other jurisdictions that have been implemented successfully.

Most pesticides are composed of synthetic petrochemicals derived from fracked natural gas and oil. Pesticides have many harmful effects throughout their life cycle starting with manufacture, continuing with use, and ending with deposition in the environment and disposal. Many pesticides persist for long periods in the environment leading to wide exposure and incorporation into our bodies and food chain. There are numerous pesticides and precursors (such as benzene, chlorine) with multiple effects including carcinogens, neurotoxins, mutagens, endocrine disruptors, and respiratory, reproductive and developmental toxins. We need to be cautious with pesticides because these new complex chemicals are difficult to study and as we have seen in the past (e.g., DDT, chlordane), many are restricted when harms are discovered following many years of usage. Furthermore, U.S. regulation also lags behind other jurisdictions particularly Europe. Passing this article will protect not only pesticide applicators, but also our most vulnerable population, our children, especially in municipal locations such as schools, parks and playgrounds.

The proposed by-law encourages alternatives that are less harmful and readily available.

Shrewsbury has been an environmental leader. We urge you to take this next step and vote in favor of Article 20.

Respectfully,

Deb Pasternak
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