

2022 Virtual NGD Issues Recommendation

I. Golf supports common sense, consistent, and science-based pesticide regulation that protects critical greenspaces

S. 3283, the “Protect America’s Children from Toxic Pesticides Act” (PACTPA) sponsored by Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), would gut the strict, science-based standards already in place for the registration and use of pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Under FIFRA, the EPA rigorously reviews scientific and health data for all pesticide products before they are made available for sale and use, and the data must show products work as intended on their target pests and not cause unreasonable harm to human health or the environment. Use must be strictly according to the label that accompanies each pesticide.

PACTPA undercuts these protections. It would:

- 1) Ban organophosphate and neonicotinoid insecticides, along with any product banned or otherwise prohibited by the European Union or Canada. FIFRA remains the gold standard worldwide for pesticide registration. PACTPA would upend this and rely on countries with differing standards that are often not as stringent.
- 2) Allow the public to petition the EPA to arbitrarily ban products, with an expedited review process. PACTPA creates a poorly defined “dangerous pesticide” category that substitutes science with public opinion. Further, if the EPA does not respond to a citizen petition within 90 days, use of the product is automatically suspended.
- 3) Eliminate state preemption laws. Under FIFRA, the EPA works with state environmental agencies to ensure pesticide use is safe and no additional restrictions are needed. PACTPA would allow localities to overrule state regulators and implement their own restrictions. The result would be a patchwork of regulations that would threaten, and not protect, the public.

The label is the law. Golf course superintendents are environmental stewards who follow baseline environmental compliance and then also utilize science-based agronomic and environmental best management practices (BMPs) to provide healthy greenspaces and wildlife habitat that benefit everyone. They understand that the “label is the law” when selectively using insecticide, herbicides, and fungicides to protect the health of turf, trees, and other living things on their courses.

II. Increasing Participation in Golf and Promoting its Health Benefits

The PHIT Act – Golf stands out among outdoor recreational activities as a lifelong sport that can be played across multiple generations. Prevention is key to improved health outcomes and the “Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act” will promote active lifestyles to prevent illness. PHIT lowers the cost of activity for consumers by allowing the use of pre-tax funds in HSAs, FSAs, and other medical benefit accounts to pay for most activity expenses around youth sports & activity, adult fitness, outdoor recreation, and senior physical activity programs. For golf, players would receive a discount of a 25-37 percent on greens fees, lessons, driving range fees, equipment and golf exclusive footwear but not apparel and golf footwear that can be worn

off the course. Cost, time, and access are the biggest barriers to activity and PHIT will address cost barrier.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a decline in activity, a rise in preventable chronic disease and contributed to the mental health crisis we face today. We ask you to **support the bipartisan PHIT Act by becoming a co-sponsor and pressing Congressional leaders to include PHIT in any mental health, healthcare, COVID recovery or tax legislation that moves through Congress in 2022.** The PHIT Act (HR3109/S.844) enjoys bipartisan support from 75 Member of Congress (39R-34D) and passed the House in 2018 with 277 votes. Over 100 million U.S. households have access to a pre-tax medical account and median income is \$68,000, please help Americans improve mental health and prevent chronic disease through more active lifestyles.

III. Golf Businesses and Current Labor Issues

H-2B Visas - Small businesses and employers throughout the golf industry continue to be unnecessarily harmed as they try to address critical seasonal staffing needs in today's chaotic labor market. The golf industry and other seasonal hospitality, tourism, and recreational businesses rely heavily on the H-2B visa program to fill positions during the spring and summer that American workers are unable to fill. However, the supply of available H-2B visas remains insufficient to meet demand. The Department of Homeland Security announced on February 25, 2022, that the FY2022 H-2B Visa cap had been exhausted.

HR 3897, the "H-2B Returning Worker Exemption Act", would exempt workers have been admitted to and worked in the United States on an H-2B visa during the past three fiscal years from the annual 66,000 visa cap. Additionally, HR3897 would address other program integrity measures. The H-2B program protects the jobs of the full-time, year- round Americans who rely on H-2B workers to sustain their jobs. Every H-2B worker supports 4.64 American jobs.

We ask you to **co-sponsor HR 3897 and assist small and seasonal businesses in meeting their peak workforce needs.**