
2017 Priority Issues Agenda



How the Agenda is developed

The GCSAA Board of Directors, Government Affairs Committee members and staff receive ongoing feedback on golf course management issues through communication with members, affiliated chapters (boards, executives, GCSAA Grassroots Ambassadors), regional turfgrass and green industry coalitions, allied associations, industry partners, university scientists, advocacy consultants, and government agencies. Input and feedback is also gathered from the GCSAA Member Needs Assessment, as well as issue-specific member surveys.

Based on this feedback, the GCSAA Government Affairs Committee annually develops a recommended Priority Issues Agenda. While staff actively monitor and take action on many issues impacting golf course management, the Priority Issues Agenda outlines the legislative and regulatory “priorities” for GCSAA—those that are likely to require the greatest amount of association resources and staff time.

For each priority issue the Agenda contains an informational overview, a GCSAA Board-approved position statement, current GCSAA activity on the issue, information on official GCSAA position papers, and information on coalitions in which GCSAA participates.

The recommended Agenda is submitted to the GCSAA Board of Directors for approval. Upon approval, the Agenda is distributed to members through the GCSAA Website and other association communication vehicles.

GCSAA staff utilize the Priority Issues Agenda to take action on golf course management issues. They are guided by the official GCSAA position statement for each issue.

2017 Priority Issues:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Fertilizers
- Labor and Immigration
- Pesticides
- Value of Golf
- Water Management

For more information on any government issues that affect the golf industry, please contact the GCSAA Government Affairs department at (800) 472-7878, or visit GCSAA Online at www.gcsaa.org.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Issue information:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires reasonable modifications to golf course policies, practices or procedures to serve people with disabilities (as defined by the law) on an equal basis with the rest of the general public. A reasonable modification is one that does not present an undue burden to the golf course or alter the fundamental nature of the game. GCSAA has been active in working with golfers, lawmakers and regulators to address ADA issues since the law's inception. GCSAA and its members have taken a proactive stance on golf course accessibility issues through the use of best practices to accommodate golfers with disabilities; through modification of policies; and through education and outreach to golf course owners and operators. On September 15, 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) released final rules to update its ADA regulations and implement new accessibility standards for golf courses and other recreational facilities. The rules impact municipal and commercial entities and codify the architectural guidelines for barrier removal. The rules impact new golf course development and renovations to existing facilities. Alterations to existing golf courses include the redesign of teeing grounds and greens. Mowing and other general maintenance activities are not considered an alteration. After March 15, 2012, all new golf facilities must be accessible in accordance with the golf course accessibility guidelines and existing courses must remove barriers when it is "readily achievable" over time (easy to accomplish without much difficulty or expense). The golf course accessibility standards cover: accessible routes and/or alternative golf car passages; teeing grounds; putting greens; weather shelters; and driving ranges. Further, on July 26, 2010, DOJ issued an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) specific to accessible golf cars. DOJ is considering issuing regulations requiring golf courses that provide golf cars, when replacing or acquiring additional standard golf cars, to provide accessible golf cars for use by individuals with disabilities.

GCSAA position statement:

GCSAA recognizes and supports the standards set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. As golf course management professionals, the members of GCSAA will work to make golf accessible to all persons by promoting policies and practices that consider the needs and safety of all golfers, promote the growth and vitality of the game and maintain the agronomic integrity of the golf course. Every golf facility in the U.S. has a stake in growing the game of golf. The growth of the game is dependent upon new golfers of all abilities coming into the game. The purchase of single rider golf cars should be the decision of each individual golf facility weighing multiple factors including customer service considerations, safety of the devices, market demand and economic impact to the facility.

GCSAA activity:

- GCSAA is a founding member of the National Alliance for Accessible Golf (Alliance). The mission of the Alliance is to increase participation of people with disabilities in the game of golf. GCSAA serves on the Alliance board of directors.
- Through an ongoing grant from the USGA, the USGA and the Alliance have joined forces to fund golf programs for individuals with disabilities such as the Fore Hope Golf program in Ohio.
- In May 2005, GCSAA submitted comments to the DOJ which began the process of adopting revised ADA standards consistent with Parts II and III of the revised guidelines implementing the ADA and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA), published by the Access Board on July 23, 2004, at 69 FR 44083. The Advanced Notice of Public Rulemaking addressed the issue of whether single rider golf cars should be required at all golf facilities in the U.S.
- In July 2007, the Alliance hosted its first annual Accessible Golf Pro-Am at the Toledo (OH) Country Club. The tournament raised funds for accessible golf programs throughout the country while increasing awareness in the work of the Alliance.
- In August 2008, GCSAA submitted comments to the DOJ on the proposed rulemaking issued by the agency on June 17, 2008, to adopt revised ADA Standards consistent with the 2004 ADAAG including the guidelines for recreation facilities. In the NPRM, the DOJ decided not to propose new regulations specific to accessible golf cars.
- The seminar "Making Your Golf Course ADA Accessible" was held at the 2009 GCSAA Education Conference.
- The government relations session "ADA Accessibility Guidelines and NPDES Pesticide General Permits: Prepare Your Course for Compliance" was held at the 2011 GCSAA Education Conference.
- In January 2011, GCSAA submitted comments to the DOJ on the ANPRM related to "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability by State and Local Governments and Places of Public Accommodation; Equipment and

Furniture". GCSAA also provided public testimony in January 2011 on the ANPRM at a DOJ public listening session in San Francisco.

- In September 2011, GCSAA offered a free webcast to its members on the new ADA accessibility guidelines for golf courses. The featured speaker was Peggy Greenwell, U.S. Access Board Accessibility Specialist.
- In 2012, the Alliance published an updated Toolkit for Golf Course Owners and Operators to provide guidance to golf course owners and operators seeking ways to make their golf course more accessible to golfers with disabilities.
- In 2013, the Alliance hosted the "Making Your Course Accessible to Individuals with Disabilities" presentation at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego as well as Alliance Awareness Week during June 24-28.
- In 2014, GCSAA joined the Executive Committee on the Alliance Board of Directors.
- In 2014, the Alliance distributed an Accessible Golf Assessment to all U.S. golf facilities to help the golf industry understand programming and accessibility at facilities across the country.
- In 2014, the Alliance hosted the "Growing the Game at Your Facility Through Accessible & "Inclusive" Golf Programs" session at the Golf Industry Show.
- In 2015, GCSAA hosted the "Top 10 Myths about the ADA and Golf Courses" government relations program at the Golf Industry Show in San Antonio.
- In 2015, the Alliance announced the launch of a search engine to assist individuals with disabilities in locating accessible golf facilities within their local area.
- In 2016, the Alliance exhibited for the first time ever at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego and National Golf Day event in Washington, DC.

Position paper:

Comments filed with the Department of Justice on January 24, 2011.

Comments filed with the Department of Justice on August 18, 2008.

Comments filed with the Department of Justice on May 27, 2005.

Comments filed with the Department of Justice Access Board on December 2, 1999.

National Alliance for Accessible Golf Toolkit for Golf Course Owners and Operators

Coalitions/affiliations:

National Alliance for Accessible Golf - www.accessgolf.org

Fertilizers

Issue information:

Efforts by states, municipalities and counties across the United States to ban or restrict the use of fertilizers continue as elected officials and citizens attempt to address concerns of nutrient loading in waterways. These efforts are taking place in all areas of the country including the Northeast, Florida, Great Lakes, and Mississippi River Basin. While these efforts encompass all aspects of fertilizer use, primary focus is phosphorus and nitrogen. A federal focus on cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay watershed has brought greater attention to agricultural and urban nutrient management. The Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts serve as a “model” for watershed cleanup efforts elsewhere. The EPA is pushing state and local governments to regulate fertilizers to control nutrient runoff as well as pushing states to adopt more stringent numeric nutrient water quality standards. As a result, activists are attempting to overturn state preemption laws. Golf course fertilizer use remains a target due to public perception that the amounts used to manage courses are a source of the nutrient loads. State-mandated restrictions and nutrient management plans can have a detrimental impact on golf courses if they are not developed with input from the golf course management industry and without consideration of existing environmental best management practices for golf courses.

Golf course superintendents have significantly decreased nutrient use rates and the number of acres being fertilized, according to the *2015 Nutrient Use and Management Practices on U.S. Golf Courses* survey that compared totals from 2006 and 2014. The survey was the second in the latest series of the Golf Course Environmental Profile reports, conducted by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and funded by the United States Golf Association (USGA) through GCSAA’s Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG). In 2015, conservation practices account for 90 percent of the reduction in nutrient use on U.S. golf courses. U.S. courses have seen an annual reduction in the usage of the three key nutrients found in fertilizer: nitrogen (33.6 percent), phosphate (53.1 percent), and potassium (42 percent) since 2006.

Specific fertilizer issues include:

- Nutrient Management and Management Plans
- Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)
- Fertilizer Bans/Restrictions

GCSAA position statement:

The responsible use of fertilizer is essential to maintaining healthy turfgrass. Healthy turfgrass allows communities to enjoy many benefits including: creation of critical “greenspaces”; providing wildlife habitat; and ensuring recreational opportunities. In addition, many entities both public and private rely on healthy greenspaces like golf courses as a key component in maintaining financial revenues. There are also many environmental benefits to healthy turf including the capture of run-off pollutants in stormwater, temperature buffer, erosion control, and serving as a protective barrier in groundwater.

GCSAA supports the development and use of science-based best management practices (BMPs) for fertilizer applications through superintendent–regulator–university partnerships at the local and state levels of government. To support this, the GCSAA will launch in 2017 the 50 by 2020 BMP initiative with the goal of having all 50 states with a BMP program in place by 2020 to ensure protection of human health and the environment and demonstrate the industry’s commitment to environmental stewardship. Fertilizer laws and regulations should be based on sound science supported by credible peer reviewed data and university recommendations. Sound science includes the recognized/accepted science methodologies and practices for research that follow the high standards of the scientific method. These standards include important investigational attributes and practices such as the formulation of a readily testable hypothesis; the use of systematic and well-documented experimental or analytical methods; the application of appropriate data analysis tools (e.g., statistics and mathematical models) to the data; and the articulation of conclusions that address the hypothesis and are supported by the results. Sound science is also reproducible until there are no discrepancies between observations and theory. GCSAA supports the enactment of state laws preempting regulation of the use of fertilizers and prohibiting local governments from adopting such laws. Local regulation of the use of these products is both costly and unnecessary. Only state designated regulatory agencies should be vested with the authority to regulate the use of nutrients. These agencies have the scientific expertise to properly determine nutrient requirements for each geographic region within a given state. Laws and regulations involving fertilizer applications should recognize golf properties engaged in environmental stewardship practices and/or programs that address nutrient management through science based BMP plans.

GCSAA activity:

- Staff continues to monitor and take action on fertilizer issues and is working with members to provide information on BMPs for golf courses to lawmakers and regulators and help members and chapters develop formal statewide golf specific BMPs programs.
- In Spring 2006, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) launched a coordinated grassroots effort to address attempts by activists at the local government level to ban the use of fertilizers and pesticides. GCSAA is working closely with RISE to ensure that fertilizer and specialty pest management products remain available for purchase and use.
- In 2007, GCSAA launched the Nutrient Use Survey, the third survey of the Golf Course Environmental Profile (GCEP). The overall goal of the GCEP is to develop an environmental profile of golf courses. This survey solicited information regarding nutrient use and associated practices on golf courses throughout the United States. This information will provide baseline data for documenting changes in environmental practices over time, help GCSAA respond to governmental inquiries, and answer the public's questions about environmental issues. Data from the Nutrient Use Survey was released in 2009.
 - In 2015, GCSAA launched the Nutrient Use Survey as part of the second phase of the GCEP.
 - In 2016, GCSAA published the Nutrient Use Survey as part of the second phase of the GCEP.
- GCSAA members in DE, MD, NY, WV, PA and VA formed a small, informal stakeholder group in the spring of 2010 to respond in a coordinated fashion to federal, state and local Chesapeake Bay watershed cleanup initiatives.
- In April 2010, GCSAA submitted comments to the U.S. EPA on the Executive Order 13508 Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Section 502 Guidance: Federal Land Management in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- In 2012, GCSAA members in the Northeast actively participated in the Northeast Voluntary Turf Fertilizer Initiative whose goal is to develop mutually agreeable voluntary guidelines on the formulation, labeling and application of turf fertilizer for the Northeast region.
- In 2013, GCSAA members worked with state and local officials on nutrient pollution issues in Cape Cod, Massachusetts; worked with the West Virginia EPA on the development of a fertilizer education program as part of ongoing efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay watershed; and continued to respond to city and county fertilizer bans throughout Florida.
- In 2014, special attention was focused on fertilizer issues in Toledo, Ohio; Florida; and North Carolina.
- In 2014, GCSAA Government Relations staff provided a national overview on nutrient regulation at the Indiana GCSA Golf Course Workshop: Conservation Best Management Practices.
- The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative was launched in 2010 to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the largest system of fresh surface water in the world — the Great Lakes. During FY15 -19, federal agencies will continue to use Great Lakes Restoration Initiative resources to strategically target the biggest threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem. GCSAA is working with its chapters in the region to monitor this Initiative and identify any impacts to golf courses.
- GCSAA is closely monitoring the cleanup of the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxic Zone and associated lawsuits and working with chapters in the 31 states within the Mississippi River Basin to develop BMP programs.
- During 2016, GCSAA and the USGA worked with the University of Florida to develop a BMPs Planning Guide for official release at the 2017 Golf Industry Show.

Position paper:

Comments filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on April 10, 2010.

Comments filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on November 8, 2010.

Coalitions/affiliations: Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) - www.pestfacts.org

Labor and Immigration

Issue information:

An available, legal and trained workforce is vital to the economic success of golf facilities and a top priority for the golf industry. Bureau of Labor Statistics data demonstrates the demographic reality that the U.S. population is aging, growth in the young workforce is declining, young workers are increasingly educated and disinterested in unskilled labor jobs, and major worker shortages are forecasted especially for seasonal and less-skilled positions. Significant labor shortages will make it difficult for many golf facilities to fill both their permanent and temporary/seasonal labor needs. The nation's golf courses cannot be sustained, or grow, without access to an adequate workforce. Many depend on immigrant labor due to the difficulty in finding U.S. workers willing to take seasonal, unskilled jobs. Proper documentation of workers presents its own set of unique challenges. The U.S. labor shortage, comprehensive immigration reform and mandatory use of E-Verify are issues Congress continues to debate as they try to address the need for a stable, legal workforce to ensure the nation's economic security.

The federal H-2B visa program is used by U.S. golf facilities to secure legal employees when they cannot fill seasonal jobs with American workers despite intensive recruitment efforts. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) must certify that qualified workers are not available in the U.S. and that the foreign worker's employment will not adversely affect wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers. There is an annual 66,000 H-2B visa cap, when in times of economic prosperity, has been reached early. According to DOL statistics, in 2006, golf facilities (including resorts) asked for approximately 26,000 H-2B visa workers – of that number over 7,700 were for golf course maintenance positions. The number of H-2B visa workers in the golf industry has declined with the country's economic decline. Requests for H-2B visa workers at golf facilities will increase as the economy rebuilds and there is more competition for seasonal labor.

The H-2B visa program has been under attack since 2009. DOL continues to issue and finalize regulations that significantly increase the hourly wages that must be paid to H-2B workers as well as revamp the program entirely thereby making it difficult if not impossible for small, seasonal employers to use. In some instances, DOL regulations have been temporarily stopped by Congress or litigation. In 2015, the DOL and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) jointly issued the H-2B Comprehensive Final Rule and the H-2B Wage Methodology Final Rule. These rules increase costs, petition requirements and burdensome recordkeeping on small businesses. The regulations were issued as final rules with no opportunity for input from the regulated community.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), commonly called the Affordable Care Act or "Obamacare" is a United States federal statute signed into law by President Barack Obama on March 23, 2010. It represents the most significant regulatory overhaul of the U.S. healthcare system since the passage of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965. Golf facilities are closely monitoring implementation of the PPACA for any impacts to the bottom line. Golf facilities are preparing for increased administrative and paperwork requirements as they comply with the new mandates. In addition, health care costs will likely increase at golf courses. Treatment of seasonal workers is of special concern.

In the summer of 2015, the Department of Labor (DOL) released new overtime pay regulations. The regulations are in response to a 2014 directive by President Obama to update overtime rules under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). FLSA guarantees overtime pay at a rate of one and one-half the employee's regular rate of pay for hours worked in excess of 40 in a workweek. The current FLSA has a salary threshold of \$23,660 annually (\$455 per week), meaning ANY employee making less is eligible for overtime. Employees making over the \$23,660 annual threshold are eligible for overtime unless they fall under a specific industry exemption (teachers, doctors, lawyers) or the "white collar exemption." These exemptions include; executive/managerial, administrative, professional, outside sales and computer employees. On May 18, 2016 President Obama announced the publication of the DOL's final rule updating the overtime regulations. The final rule sets the standard salary level at the 40th percentile of earnings of full-time salaried workers in the lowest-wage Census Region, currently the South (\$913 per week; \$47,476 annually for a full-year worker) starting December 1, 2016. The final rule will be highly costly to golf facilities – most of which are small businesses.

GCSAA position statement:

Comprehensive immigration reform includes four pillars of reform: legalization; employment verification systems; temporary worker programs; and border security. GCSAA does not engage in the debate over legalization or border security. Due to the difficulty many golf facilities have in finding permanent and seasonal U.S. workers, GCSAA supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes guest worker provisions. Reform measures should

safeguard seasonal worker programs and not place undue economic burdens on employers. Reform should create an immigration system and guest worker program that functions efficiently for employers, workers and government agencies. Reform should create a program that ensures U.S. workers are not displaced by foreign workers and ensures that all workers enjoy the same labor law protections. Reform should strengthen national security by providing for the screening of foreign workers and creating a disincentive for illegal immigration. Enforcement of immigration laws is critical for the economic vitality of the country, national security and for successful comprehensive immigration reform. GCSAA supports reform that creates a fair employment eligibility verification system for new hires that functions efficiently, effectively, and inexpensively for employers, workers and government agencies.

GCSAA would like a more reasonable approach to overtime pay. We acknowledge the hard work the Department of Labor put into crafting the new overtime pay regulations but we want the agency to withdraw the rule and develop a new one that takes into consideration regional cost of living expenses. We want to see a phased in approach to the increase to the annual salary threshold also. GCSAA members need additional time for employers to ensure compliance, communicate changes and accurately reclassify employees. GCSAA supports several pieces of legislation in Congress that reflect our concerns including:

- H.R. 4773 – Protecting Workplace Advancement and Opportunity Act
- S. 2707 - Protecting Workplace Advancement and Opportunity Act
- H.R. 5813 – Overtime Reform and Enhancement Act

GCSAA activity:

- GCSAA has been involved in labor and immigration issues through support of federal comprehensive immigration reform legislation and the preservation of the federal H-2B visa program, which is used by U.S. golf facilities to secure legal, seasonal workers when U.S. workers are not available or unwilling to work.
- In 2005, GCSAA was part of a successful effort to modify the H-2B visa program to exempt workers who had used the program previously from being included in the annual numerical visa limit.
- GCSAA supported legislation in 2006 and 2007 which provided extensions of the exemption approved during 2005.
- Members of GCSAA's Government Relations Committee (GRC) went to Capitol Hill during 2006-2013 to talk with members of Congress about the need for comprehensive immigration reform. During the 2013 National Golf Day, GRC members met with 6 of 8 of the Senate immigration reform "Gang of Eight."
- GCSAA launched an action alert in December 2009 in opposition to employers being mandated to provide healthcare coverage to seasonal workers as part of federal healthcare reform legislation.
- GCSAA continues to provide education to members on labor and immigration topics including "Managing a Spanish-speaking Crew," "Immigrant Workers," "How to Hire and How to Fire," and "Employee Recruitment and Selection: How to Hire the Right People."
- Public policy staff presented the "Immigration and the Golf Course Superintendent" seminar at the GCSAA Education Conference in years 2009-2012.
- In November 2010, GCSAA submitted comments in opposition to the Department of Labor's (DOL) proposed rulemaking related to the "Wage Methodology for the Temporary Non-Agricultural Employment H-2B Program" which would significantly raise wages paid to H-2B workers.
- In 2011, GCSAA launched a nationwide grassroots campaign focused on the assault on the H-2B visa program as well as developed a public policy podcast to educate its members on this important topic.
- In May 2011, GCSAA submitted comments in opposition to the DOL's proposed rulemaking related to "Temporary Non-Agricultural Employment of H-2B Aliens in the United States" which would fundamentally change the way the H-2B visa program works. GCSAA's H-2B visa rapid response team (GCSAA members across the country using the H-2B visa program) assisted in comment preparation.
- In 2011, GCSAA worked with the H-2B Workforce Coalition to successfully lobby Congress to include an amendment in the Fiscal Year 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, which stopped any federal funding of the DOL's wage rule until October 1, 2013. Congress extended the wage rule prohibition until March 27, 2013 with the signing of the 6 month FY2013 Continuing Resolution.
- In 2011, GCSAA supported litigation filed in the U.S. District Court in Florida that challenged the propriety of the wage rule concerning the computation and implementation of the prevailing wages for H-2B visa holders.
- In 2012, GCSAA supported additional litigation filed in the U.S. District Court of Florida that challenged the DOL's proposed H-2B visa program overhaul rule.
- In 2013, GCSAA continued to support ongoing litigation challenging the DOL's wage and program overhaul rules. GCSAA also actively supported passage of comprehensive immigration reform legislation in Congress as well as legislation that blocked implementation of the new 2013 DOL emergency wage rule.

- In June 2013, GCSAA submitted comments to DOL in opposition to their H-2B emergency wage rule that increased wages by 30% in the middle of the golfing season.
- At the 2014 Golf Industry Show, GCSAA presented “Healthcare Reform: What You Need to Know Now.” This presentation gave superintendents an early working knowledge of the PPACA and the potential treatment of seasonal workers under the PPACA.
- In 2014, GCSAA supported the bipartisan STARS Act of 2014, which bill would simplify seasonal employer compliance with the PPACA.
- In 2014, GCSAA supported H.R. 4238, a comprehensive bill to preserve and protect the H-2B visa program. The bill would clarify the “prevailing wage” methodology that should be used for setting H-2B wages and reinstate the H-2B returning worker exemption.
- In 2015, GCSAA submitted comment as part of the H-2B Workforce Coalition expressing that the U.S. Secretary of Labor doesn’t have the power to issue a declaratory order confirming his ability to set H-2B labor certification program policy.
- GCSAA members participated in the H-2B Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill on April 15, 2015.
- In 2105, GCSAA pushed for passage of positive H-2B provisions included in the House and Senate Departments of Homeland Security and Labor appropriations bills into the final FY2015 omnibus spending bill.
- In 2015, GCSAA partnered with the PGA of America, CMAA, NGCOA and the NCA to jointly develop public comments regarding the U.S. Department’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding overtime pay regulations.
- In 2016, GCSAA partnered with the PGA of America, CMAA, NGCOA and the NCA to jointly develop a letter in support of H.R. 5813, the Overtime Reform and Enhancement Act.
- GCSAA hosted a widely attended webinar on June 29, 2016 called Getting Ready for the New Department of Labor Overtime Rules.

Position paper:

Comments filed with the U.S. Department of Justice on May 17, 2011.

Comments filed with the U.S. Department of Justice on November 12, 2010.

H-2B visa reform comments filed with the U.S. Department of Labor on February 2, 2015

Overtime pay comments filed with the U.S. Department of Labor on September 4, 2015.

Golf industry support letter on H.R. 5813 sent to Congressman Kurt Shrader on August 1, 2016.

Coalitions/affiliations: H-2B Workforce Coalition; Essential Worker Immigration Coalition; Save Small Business Coalition; ImmigrationWorks USA

Pesticides

Issue information:

Golf course superintendents utilize pesticides as part of a system of integrated pest management (IPM) to control pests and maintain healthy turf. Best management practices, continuing education, peer-reviewed research and technology are important elements for an IPM approach for golf course superintendents. The latest technology in application equipment is used on golf courses which allows for precise application of pesticides. Pesticide production is highly regulated in the U.S. through the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Pesticides used to maintain healthy golf course turf have been thoroughly tested by EPA. This agency evaluates pesticides to ensure they will not have unreasonable adverse effects on humans, the environment and non-target species when used according to label directions. The safe and responsible use of pesticides, and the continued availability of effective products, is a top priority for GCSAA and its members. This priority was reinforced in 2000 when GCSAA members passed an addition to the association's bylaws creating new entry and maintenance membership standards for Class A members. As of July 1, 2003, to maintain their membership status, Class A members must obtain a state pesticide applicator license or successfully complete a GCSAA-developed IPM exam which tests on principles of pesticide usage. Specific pesticide issues include:

- State Preemption/Pesticide Bans
- Pesticide Regulation
- Endangered Species Act Litigation
- Pollinators

Over the past several years, U.S. golf courses have increased their reliance on non-pesticide pest control practices such as cultural control, plant growth regulators and biological control. In addition, there has been a significant downward trend, since 2007, in the degree to which superintendents feel that pesticide restrictions influenced their pest management programs. The 2016 Golf Course Environmental Profile (GCEP) Pest Management Practices Survey showed that reliance on conventional chemistries such as fungicides, herbicides, insecticides and nematicides has either decreased or showed little change. The data suggests that turf managers are using non-pesticide control practices in conjunction with conventional chemistries, rather than as substitutes for them.

Position statement:

The responsible use of pesticides is essential to maintaining healthy turfgrass. Healthy turfgrass allows communities to enjoy many benefits including: creation of critical "greenspaces", providing wildlife habitat, and ensuring recreational opportunities. There are many other environment benefits to healthy turfgrass including the capture of run-off pollutants in stormwater, temperature buffer, erosion control, and serving as a protective barrier to groundwater. In addition, many entities both public and private rely on healthy greenspaces like golf courses as a key component in maintaining financial revenues.

Pesticide laws and regulations should be based on sound science supported by credible peer reviewed data and university recommendations. Sound science includes the recognized/accepted science methodologies and practices for research that follow the high standards of the scientific method. These standards include important investigational attributes and practices such as the formulation of a readily testable hypothesis; the use of systematic and well-documented experimental or analytical methods; the application of appropriate data analysis tools (e.g., statistics and mathematical models) to the data; and the articulation of conclusions that address the hypothesis and are supported by the results. Sound science is also reproducible until there are no discrepancies between observations and theory. Golf courses employ licensed pesticide applicators that are required to pass state administered exams and complete continuing education each year. These applicators are trained in the safe and proper use of pesticides within an integrated pest management (IPM) system. Golf course superintendents follow best management practices for proper pesticide management on the course. GCSAA will launch in 2017 the 50 by 2020 BMP initiative with the goal of having all 50 states with a BMP program in place by 2020 to ensure protection of human health and the environment and demonstrate the industry's commitment to environmental stewardship.

GCSAA activity:

- GCSAA is a 22-year member of the U.S. EPA's Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP), which is a voluntary program that forms partnerships with pesticide users to reduce the potential health and environmental risks associated with pesticide use and implement pollution prevention strategies. EPA named GCSAA a 2002 PESP Champion.

- In 2006, GCSAA's philanthropic organization, The Environmental Institute for Golf, began funding the development of an IPM template that will guide superintendents in the preparation of written IPM plans for the golf courses they manage. The IPM Planning Guide was launched to the golf industry in July 2010.
- In Spring 2008, GCSAA launched the Pesticide Use Survey, the fourth survey of the Golf Course Environmental Profile (GCEP). The overall goal of the GCEP is to develop an environmental profile of golf courses. This survey solicited information regarding pest management and associated practices on golf courses throughout the United States. This information will provide baseline data for documenting changes in environmental practices over time, help GCSAA respond to governmental inquiries, and answer the public's questions about environmental issues. Data from the Pesticide Use Survey was released in 2012.
 - In 2015, GCSAA launched the Pest Management Practices Survey as part of the second phase of the GCEP.
 - In 2016, GCSAA published the Pest Management Practices Survey as part of the second phase of the GCEP.
- GCSAA biannually participates in the EPA Office of Pesticide Program's Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC) meetings at EPA HQ in Washington, DC. The PPDC provides a forum for a diverse group of stakeholders to provide feedback to the pesticide program on various pesticide regulatory, policy and program implementation issues.
- In 2012, GCSAA and its government relations and environmental programs staff were featured in two articles in PESPWire, a newsletter from the EPA's PESP program. The articles focused on integrated pest management in the golf industry and how GCSAA can help golf course superintendents learn more about IPM.
- In April 2013, GCSAA partnered with RISE and CropLife America to host a tour at the Bethesda Country Club in Maryland for some 60+ RISE-CLA Spring Conference attendees to see first-hand the day-to-day implementation of IPM programs on the course and throughout the facility.
- In 2014, GCSAA started attending the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO) and State-FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) committee meetings.
- In 2014, GCSAA Government Relations staff provided an overview of national pesticides issues impacting golf courses at the American Phytopathological Society annual symposium.

Position paper: Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States (Golf & the Environment initiative)

Coalitions/affiliations: U.S. EPA Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP)
Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE)
Pesticide Policy Coalition (PPC)

State Preemption/Pesticide Bans

Issue information:

Many cities and counties across the country are debating ordinances to ban/restrict the use of chemical pesticides on city/public property. This includes parks, city office buildings and government-owned recreation facilities such as golf courses. Local bans/restrictions on pesticide use is a trend that has gained momentum ever since the city of San Francisco, Calif., adopted such an ordinance in 1996. This ordinance has been used as a model by anti-pesticide activists to try to enact similar laws in other locations. Bans on pesticide use by local governments has also been a precursor to efforts to totally ban the use of all pesticides in a community—including applications by private citizens to their homes and lawns, applications to commercial property, privately owned golf courses, sports fields and other recreational facilities.

Many states have preemption (or "state primacy") laws to prohibit municipalities from adopting local laws and regulations on the use of pesticides and fertilizers. Without such laws, the more than 80,000 municipalities in the U.S. could adopt and enforce their own unique ordinances, including use and applicator certification, making compliance virtually impossible. Local pesticide restrictions hinder the ability of golf course superintendents to control pests that have a detrimental effect on healthy turf.

GCSAA position statement:

GCSAA supports the development and use of science based best management practices (BMPs) and enactment of integrated pest management plans (IPM) for pesticide applications through superintendent-regulator-university partnerships at local and state levels of government. GCSAA also supports the enactment of state laws based on sound science preempting regulation of the use of pesticides and prohibiting local governments from adopting such laws. Sound science includes the recognized/accepted science methodologies and practices for research that follow the high standards of the scientific method. These standards include important investigational attributes and practices such as the formulation of a readily testable hypothesis; the use of systematic and well-documented experimental or

analytical methods; the application of appropriate data analysis tools (e.g., statistics and mathematical models) to the data; and the articulation of conclusions that address the hypothesis and are supported by the results. Sound science is also reproducible until there are no discrepancies between observations and theory.

Local regulation of the use of these products is costly, unnecessary and interferes in the application of IPM practices on the golf course. Local pesticide bans/restrictions hinder the ability of golf course superintendents to control pests that have a detrimental effect on healthy turf, trees and ornamentals. Restricting the use of effective pesticides can curb the ability to control disease carrying pests and can jeopardize public health and sanitation. Local pesticide bans/restrictions also require the use of resources for investigation of violations and enforcement, creating an unnecessary drain on community funds.

When used properly, pesticides promote healthy turfgrass which provides many environmental benefits including wildlife habitat and a natural water filter.

GCSAA activity:

- GCSAA monitors and takes action in collaboration with members and chapters on preemption/primacy laws and regulations and pesticide bans/restrictions across the country.
- In Spring 2006, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) launched a coordinated grassroots effort to address attempts at the local government level by activists to ban the use of pesticides and fertilizers. GCSAA is working closely with RISE to ensure that specialty pest management products remain available for purchase and use.
- In 2013, GCSAA and its members responded to proposed pesticide bans in Long Island, New York; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Thurston County, Washington; Tacoma Park, Maryland and Montgomery County, Maryland.
- In 2014, GCSAA and its members responded to proposed pesticide bans in Charlottesville, Virginia; Montgomery County, Maryland; and Cook County, Illinois. GCSAA also closely followed attempts by the Colorado Pesticide Reform Coalition to overturn pesticide preemption in the state.
- In 2015, GCSAA and its members responded to proposed pesticide bans in Montgomery County, Maryland; South Portland, Maine; Colorado; Connecticut; and Charlottesville, Virginia.
- In 2016, GCSAA and RISE worked together to address anti-pesticide bills in CA, CT, MA, ME, MD, NY, NJ, FL, VT, NH, and NM.

Position paper: *Preemption of Local Laws on the Use of Pesticides*
 Local Bans on Pesticide Use

Pesticide Regulation

Issue information:

The 1996 Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) fundamentally changed the way EPA regulates pesticides. FQPA mandated a single, health-based standard for all pesticides in all foods; provided special protections for infants and children; expedited approval of safer pesticides; and required periodic re-evaluation of pesticide registrations and tolerances to ensure that the scientific data supporting pesticide registrations will remain up-to-date in the future. Under FQPA, EPA was required to reevaluate, within 10 years, all food tolerances that were in place as of August 1996. The agency completed over 99% of the required tolerance reassessments on Aug. 3, 2006. This review resulted in changes to how golf course chemicals are regulated including elimination of certain uses and changes in labeling for others. In August 2006, EPA issued a final rule, which implemented a new Registration Review process. Starting in 2007, every pesticide active ingredient must be reviewed at least once every 15 years. The review of organophosphates began in 2008, and the review of the carbamates class started in 2009.

A Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in January 2009 in the *National Cotton Council vs. U.S. EPA* case overturned the EPA's Aquatic Pesticides Rule from 2006, which held that pesticides applied in accordance with Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) labels are exempt from the Clean Water Act's (CWA) permitting requirements. Effective October 31, 2011, pesticide applications made in, over or near "waters of the U.S." require a CWA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Never in the 65 years of FIFRA or 40 years of the CWA has the federal government required a permit for chemical spraying activities for control of such pests as mosquitoes, algae and invasive aquatic weeds. Congress omitted pesticides in 1972 when it enacted the CWA, and despite major rewrites since, has never looked beyond FIFRA for the regulation of pesticides. Unnecessary permitting places a significant economic burden on golf facilities who comprise a large group of small businesses. States spend significant resources in implementing and enforcing a permit that most regulators believe does little if anything to further protect water quality. Citizen action lawsuits can disrupt operations and jeopardize businesses. Future expansion of the permit is of concern.

In March 2009, President Obama issued a Memorandum on Scientific Integrity that said the “public must be able to trust the science and scientific process informing public policy decisions.” In March 2011, the White House issued a Memorandum to all Executive Departments and Agencies entitled “Principles for Regulation and Oversight of Emerging Technologies.” The 2011 Memo said “Federal regulations and oversight of emerging technologies should be based on the best available scientific evidence.” GCSAA has grown increasingly concerned these commitments to sound scientific principles are not being followed at EPA. The agency has been implementing policies at odds with established procedures. EPA actions on pollinators have appeared to be ad-hoc and responsive more to considerations of public perception and not based on established science underlying the issue. EPA’s reliance on epidemiological data in the case of its assessment of chlorpyrifos did not follow long established Agency standards for sound scientific risk assessment.

GCSAA position statement:

GCSAA believes that all pesticide uses should be under the legal primacy of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). GCSAA supports the goals of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA). GCSAA supports the use of real data and sound scientific methodology to assess pesticides for risk. GCSAA and its members have and will continue to provide accurate and usable data to the regulatory and scientific communities for use in Registration Review implementation decisions. The continued availability of safe, effective and economically viable pesticide products is a top priority for GCSAA and its members.

EPA should return to the standards put forward by the White House in 2009 and 2011 and make regulatory decisions based on sound science, not public opinion. The agency should also cooperate with USDA and the other regulatory agencies as part of Registration and Re-Registration activities. It is important moving forward that EPA reestablish procedures we can all rely upon that preserves and protects FIFRA.

GCSAA activity:

- GCSAA will submit comments as appropriate and provide input on golf course products and their uses to EPA as they undergo Registration Review as well as work with members and industry partners to protect and preserve golf course product use.
- In June 2005, based on information provided by GCSAA, the U.S. EPA adjusted a simulation model used to predict pesticide concentrations in surface and ground water for use in exposure assessments. The new golf course adjustment factor quantitatively discounts the percentage of managed land area on a golf course that is not treated with a pesticide so a more accurate picture of actual pesticide use is available.
- During Fall 2006, the EPA issued decisions banning the use of organic arsenicals (MSMA, DSMA, CAMA, and Cacodylic Acid) and PCNB from the turfgrass market. In response, GCSAA launched a grassroots letter writing campaign to urge the agency to support the continued registration and use of PCNB and MSMA on golf courses. In 2008, GCSAA worked closely with the MAA Task Force – made up of MSMA manufacturers and product formulators – to oppose EPA’s action.
- In March 2010, GCSAA submitted comments in opposition to EPA’s proposed spray drift guidance.
- GCSAA is actively engaged with EPA and states as they draft, implement and enforce federal CWA NPDES permits for pesticide applications in, over, or near “waters of the U.S.”
 - In 2009, GCSAA partnered with 22 major agriculture and non-agriculture organizations in the filing of an amicus “friend of the court” brief to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in support of a rehearing of the *National Cotton Council vs. U.S. EPA* case.
 - GCSAA submitted comments on EPA’s draft CWA NPDES pesticide general permit in July 2010.
 - In September 2010, GCSAA launched an action alert pushing for passage of federal legislation that would amend FIFRA to clarify that additional CWA NPDES permits are not required for pesticide applications made in accordance with FIFRA.
 - In 2010 and 2011, GCSAA assisted its affiliated chapters in commenting on draft state-specific CWA NPDES pesticide general permits.
 - The government relations session “ADA Accessibility Guidelines and NPDES Pesticide General Permits: Prepare Your Course for Compliance” was held at the 2011 GCSAA Education Conference in Orlando.
 - In July 2011, GCSAA submitted comments to EPA in opposition to the “Draft Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives in NMFS’ Draft Biological Opinion on the Proposed Pesticides General Permit.”
 - In 2011, GCSAA launched a nationwide grassroots campaign focused on passage of H.R. 872 (the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2011), organized meetings in district offices between Congressional staff and GCSAA field staff/affiliated chapter members, and developed a public policy podcast to educate members on this important topic.

- In 2012, GCSAA spent considerable time on Capitol Hill lobbying member of Congress in support of inclusion of H.R. 872 into the 2012 Farm Bill.
- In 2012, GCSAA launched a national grassroots campaign in support of S. 3605, the Restoring Effective Environmental Protection Act, the Senate companion bill to H.R. 872.
- In 2013, GCSAA lobbied in support of "The Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2013" (H.R. 935), "The Sensible Environmental Protection Act of 2013 (S. 802), and pesticide permit relief in the 2013 Farm Bill.
- In 2014, GCSAA continued to lobby in support of H.R. 935. The bill passed the U.S. House on July 31, 2014.
- In 2015, GCSAA lobbied in support of "The Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2015" (H.R. 897) and "The Sensible Environmental Protection Act of 2015" (S. 1500).
- In 2012, GCSAA lobbied members of Congress in support of H.R. 6194, the *U.S. Agricultural Sector Relief Act of 2012*, which would put additional pressure on EPA to grant methyl bromide critical use exemptions.
- In 2012, GCSAA submitted comments on EPA's denial of a petition to suspend the clothianidin registration.
- In 2013, GCSAA and its members participated in the focus meeting of the opening of the MSMA Registration Review docket.
- In 2013, GCSAA worked with U.S. EPA to secure a methyl bromide critical use exemption until a suitable alternative is found.
- On August 22, 2013, GCSAA offered the "Hazard Communication, the Globally Harmonized System & Your Golf Course" webinar to provide initial background on the update to the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, aligning it with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling.
- At the 2014 Golf Industry Show, GCSAA presented the "Healthcare Reform and the Hazard Communication Standard: What You Need to Know Now" session which focused on implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Pesticide Labeling (GHS).
- GCSAA was able to secure from the U.S. EPA a three year extension on the use of existing stocks of Namacur.
- In 2015, GCSAA worked with industry and EPA on the Registration Review of the pyrethroid class of insecticides.
- In 2015, GCSAA submitted public comment EPA's proposed rule to amend applicator certification requirements for Restricted Use Pesticides.
- In 2016, GCSAA worked with the Pesticide Policy Coalition on a strategic effort to ensure EPA follows its longstanding policy and procedures for pesticide regulation under FIFRA.
- On July 26, 2016, GCSAA offered the "Globally Harmonized System & SDS Labels at Your Golf Course" webinar to provide update on the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, aligning it with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling.

Position paper:

NMFS' Draft Biological Opinion on the Proposed Pesticides General Permit comments filed with the U.S. EPA on July 25, 2011.

NPDES pesticide general permit comments filed with the U.S. EPA on July 19, 2010.

Spray drift comments filed with the U.S. EPA on March 5, 2010.

Spray drift comments filed with the U.S. EPA in April 2014.

Comments on individual chemicals on file with the U.S. EPA.

Coalitions/affiliations:

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) - www.pestfacts.org

Pesticide Policy Coalition (PPC)

Endangered Species Act Litigation

Issue information:

To meet the conservation and species recovery goals of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs must consult on each "action" to register or re-register a pesticide use. This consultation process is outlined in Section 7 of the ESA. During the past 35+ years, EPA has not successfully implemented ESA obligations for pesticides. However, it has been EPA's intention to integrate ESA into the Registration Review process. Instead, activist-driven litigation is now driving the ESA consultation process for pesticides.

In 2001, environmental groups sued EPA in the *Washington Toxics Coalition vs. EPA* case for failing to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on the effects of 54 pesticide active ingredients on protected Pacific salmonids in the Northwest. In 2002, a federal district court ordered EPA to determine if ESA consultations are

necessary for the 54 pesticides that may pose risks. As part of a settlement agreement, EPA agreed to place interim restrictions on the 54 pesticide active ingredients – including large no spray buffer zones – while they worked through the multi-year consultation process with the NMFS. As EPA moved through the consultation process with the NMFS, the interim restrictions on individual products become permanent restrictions. Similar copycat lawsuits during the past 10 years have resulted in pesticide use restrictions at golf facilities. In January 2011, in a landmark case, activists filed suit against EPA for its failure to consult with federal wildlife agencies regarding the impacts of 380 pesticides, many of which are used on golf courses, on more than 216 endangered and threatened species scattered throughout the U.S. On April 22, 2013, the U.S. District Court Northern District of California dismissed the *Center for Biological Diversity and Pesticide Action Network North America v. Environmental Protection Agency*, Endangered Species Act "Mega-Suit." In June 2013, plaintiffs filed a narrower lawsuit which asked for interim measures restricting the use of 78 pesticides on 216 listed species. In May 2014, the EPA and a coalition of industry groups both requested that the lawsuit challenging the registration of 78 pesticides over alleged violations of the ESA be dismissed in its entirety.

The ESA Section 7 consultation process is flawed and the lack of a clear and transparent ESA consultation process is seriously jeopardizing the availability and use of effective products to the golf industry. In 2011, EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and NMFS asked the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to evaluate the ESA consultation review process for pesticide registration actions related to endangered species. In November 2013, the NAS released its much anticipated report on pesticides and endangered species stating that EPA, the NMFS, and the FWS should use a common approach when determining the potential effects a pesticide has on an endangered species and its environment. In 2014, the EPA began holding workshops to provide a forum for stakeholders to offer scientific and technical feedback on the joint interim approaches issued in November 2013. These stakeholder meetings continued throughout 2015.

The most serious challenge to the integrity of pesticide registrations approved under FIFRA is ESA litigation. The new ESA consultation process as currently coordinated between EPA, USDA and other agencies has led to a years-long evaluation process of over 30,000 pages of material for the first three pesticides alone. This new assessment process is time consuming, costly and not practical. It will cost hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars and take decades to complete. But it is currently the template of what it takes to conduct an ESA consultation for pesticide products.

GCSAA position statement:

GCSAA shares in EPA's commitment to ensure that actions carried out by it and other federal agencies should not harm endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of their critical habitat. GCSAA and its members have long-standing support, involvement and implementation of environmental stewardship programs that protect wildlife species and habitat throughout the U.S. GCSAA supports EPA and USDA working with federal fish and wildlife agencies to promulgate new rules that establish clear and equitable procedures for notice and comment on the EPA's pesticide effects determinations for endangered species and subsequent actions including draft Biological Opinions and potential product restrictions. The new consultation process should be responsible, streamlined and sustainable.

GCSAA activity:

- In February 2011, GCSAA submitted comments to EPA in support of a petition filed by Growers for ESA Transparency (GET) that asked EPA to establish "clear and equitable procedures" for stakeholder comment during the Endangered Species Act consultation process for EPA pesticide registrations.
- GCSAA launched nationwide grassroots campaigns in March and May of 2011 in response to EPA seeking input on the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) draft measures to protect endangered Pacific salmon from six pesticides. The draft Reasonable and Prudent Measures (RPMs) and Alternatives (RPAs) included in the NMFS' draft Biological Opinion include proposed new use restrictions on chlorothalonil and 2, 4-D not based on sound science.

Position paper:

NMFS' Draft Biological Opinion comments filed with the U.S. EPA on July 25, 2011.

Growers for ESA Transparency (GET) petition comments filed with the EPA on February 22, 2011.

Pollinators

Issue information:

GCSAA recognizes the importance of native pollinators in our ecosystem and their significant contribution to our quality of life. GCSAA is aware of and concerned about the issue of pollinator decline. Researchers are working to determine exact causes of decline and the association supports expedited review of the many potential factors that

contribute to pollinator issues. GCSAA will continue to support use of best management practices that provide habitat through native areas as well as the professional use of inputs through training, education and IPM.

In 2015, the White House Pollinator Health Task Force published its report, *National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and other Pollinators*. EPA's portion of the strategy reviewed its current and planned actions on pollinators, including its plan for pollinator risk assessments, new testing guidelines and mitigation through state pollinator plans. EPA issued a proposed rule to adopt mandatory pesticide label restrictions to protect managed bees under contract service. EPA also issued a proposed rule regarding *Risk Management Approach to Identifying Options for Protecting the Monarch Butterfly*. There has been a steady increase in the number of "pollinator free" cities across the country and big box retail stores have been phasing out the use of neonicotinoids.

GCSAA position statement:

Golf course superintendents need to conduct pest control activities and those should be done in accordance with comprehensive IPM strategies while also complying with labeling laws set forth by the EPA. GCSAA will continue to monitor and engage in regulatory activities that directly impact active ingredients used on golf courses. GCSAA will monitor indirect activities but will engage only if impacts to golf courses are imminent.

Golf facilities contribute valuable green space within any watershed and community. Within the golf course, natural and/or native areas provide opportunities to provide habitat for wild pollinators and honey bees. Golf course superintendents should continue to develop, protect and manage areas for wildlife and pollinator habitat. One key guide is the resource provided by the USGA and Xerces Society, "Making Room for Native Pollinators." Honey bees will benefit from these efforts as well.

GCSAA activity:

- In 2014, GCSAA staff participated in the USDA's Forage and Nutrition Summit in Alexandria, Virginia. The focus of the summit was on pollinator health, with key areas of discussion being nutrition research, forage research, federal programmatic efforts in establishing forage plantings, providing access to honey bees on federally managed lands and providing access to honey bees on rights-of-way and land trusts.
- In 2014, GCSAA and its members responded to proposed neonicatanoid bans in Vermont; Spokane, Washington; Seattle, Washington; and Tucson, Arizona.
- In 2015, GCSAA and its members responded to proposed neonicatanoid bans in Maine and New York.
- In 2016, GCSAA and RISE worked together to address pollinator focused bills in OH, MN, ME, MD, NC, VA, IL, CT, DC, VT, NJ, CA, MA and RI.
- GCSAA staff participated in the 2016 National Entomology Conference and Pollinator Summit. University entomology scientists worked with staff to develop pollinator BMPs and pollinator talking points for advocacy efforts.
- In 2016, Government Affairs staff participated in the Managed Pollinator Protection Plan National Symposium in Washington, DC.

Value of Golf

Issue Information:

Golf is a sport played by more than 26 million Americans, and enjoyed as a favored spectator activity by millions more. But it is far more than a game: golf is a leading U.S. industry that makes a wide variety of positive contributions to society. According to the U.S. Census data, the golf industry is larger than the motion picture and video industries. The *2011 Golf Economy Report* quantified golf's annual direct economic impact as \$68.8 billion, the industry provides 2 million jobs and \$55.6 billion in wage income. 76 percent of golf facilities are open to the public. Approximately 9 of 10 golfers play on public courses.

Golf also generates more than \$3.9 billion annually for charities across the country. Approximately 143,000 charity events raising \$3.9 billion (\$26,300 per event), are held annually with 12 million participants. This includes local community fundraising initiatives as well as national initiatives. Nearly 12,000 facilities (75% of the total) hosted an event in 2011.

In 2016, the golf industry released new health and wellness data. A regular game of golf is likely to increase life expectancy and lead to better physical health, according to University of Edinburgh researchers. The review of 5,000 studies on golf and wellbeing found physical benefits increased with the player's age. The study is part of the Gold and Health Project, which is led by the World Golf Foundation. Walking 18 holes is equal to a 5-mile walk or 3.5-to-4 mile run. Playing golf and walking 18 holes can burn up to 2,000 calories. Golfers exceed 10,000 steps in a typical round of golf, meeting the recommended guidelines for daily exercise.

Most golf facilities in the U.S. qualify as small businesses according to the Small Business Administration. The golf facility size standard to be qualified as a small business is \$15 million in average annual receipts. Unfortunately, golf has been excluded from receiving benefits from a number of prominent pieces of federal legislation in recent years including relief for the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, relief to victims of natural disasters across the country in 2008 and 2009, and in 2009 with the federal economic stimulus bill. Continued exclusion of the golf industry – a major generator of jobs and tax revenue across the country – from relief and stimulus measures being considered by Congress is a serious challenge facing the industry.

GCSAA position statement:

Golf is more than a game – it is a major U.S. industry, providing 2 million jobs and creating annual wage income of \$55.6 billion. In total, the U.S. golf economy exceeds \$176.8 billion in direct, indirect and induced impacts. The golf industry produced \$20.6 billion in travel expenditures in 2011. Golf's core industries exceed the charitable impact of the Major League Baseball, National Football League, National Basketball Association and National Hockey League combined. As a significant contributor to the U.S. economy, the continued health and growth of the golf industry has a direct bearing on jobs, economic development and tax revenues for thousands of communities across the country.

Golf facilities are good for the communities they serve. Golf contributes to society by providing economic, human, health/wellness and environmental benefits. Golf facilities are professionally managed by individuals who have achieved various levels of certification, they serve as managed open green space providing habitat for wildlife, and they generate \$3.9 billion for charity each year. Golf as a fundraising vehicle includes an estimated 12,000 golf facilities, 143,000 events, 12 million participants and raises \$26,300 average per function. Golf courses are a valuable use of land and can provide solutions to problems resulting from land degradation and urban development, including stormwater management, wetland mitigation and brownfield redevelopment.

GCSAA supports partnerships and collaboration with federal and state commerce departments and federal, state and local chamber of commerce organizations to advance the growth of the game of golf. Golf should be included in federal catastrophic relief targeted at businesses following natural disasters. Golf should have access to federal incentives and funding that stimulates the golf industry. Local and state golf associations should continue to invest in economic impact reports as a means to educate local, state and federal policymakers on the values of the golf industry.

GCSAA activity:

- GCSAA's Government Relations Committee has gone to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. since 2008 to talk with members of Congress about golf's exclusion from federal relief and stimulus funding and to educate lawmakers on the game's contributions to society.
- GCSAA continues to address anti-golf rhetoric in the local, state and national press. In May 2009, the GCSAA, PGA of America and CMAA issued a joint statement in response to an anti-golf article in *USA Today*.
- GCSAA contributes financially to the development of state economic impact studies through the Golf 20/20 initiative. In collaboration with golf allies, this economic information is shared with regulators, lawmakers, the media and the public through state capitol lobby days, media events, lawmaker meetings, and golf course site visits.
- In February 2010, GCSAA joined CMAA, the PGA of America and NGCOA in the launch of the We Are Golf campaign, an initiative to change the face of golf and to represent the economic, human and environmental benefits of the industry at federal, state and local levels of government. We Are Golf works to share information, case studies and articles with media, elected officials, regulators and other key constituents to inform them on issues of concern.
- GCSAA/The Environmental Institute for Golf launched the "Golf's Drive Toward Sustainability" campaign at the Golf Industry Show in February 2010. Sustainability in golf is about ensuring profitable operations while making decisions that are in the long-term interest of the environment and communities. The program objective is to facilitate collaboration among golf associations and organizations to build a toolbox of resources that will be available to golf facilities to strive toward sustainability.
- During 2011, the We Are Golf coalition pushed for golf's inclusion in national disaster relief legislation being discussed by Congress.
 - GCSAA launched a nationwide grassroots campaign focused on the inclusion of golf in the Southeastern Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2011.
 - GCSAA developed a public policy podcast to educate its members on this important topic.
- In 2012, the U.S. golf industry developed, signed and released a sustainability statement that supported a sustainability statement authorized by the international golf federations also in 2012. The U.S. statement indicates how sustainability can be advanced in the design, construction, maintenance and operation of a golf facility.
- Florida Golf Day was conducted on behalf of We Are Golf and the Florida Golf Industry on February 14, 2012 in Tallahassee. The event included a meeting with Governor Rick Scott as well as a press conference with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor.
- On April 18, 2012, over 95 members of the golf industry converged on Capitol Hill for the 5th annual National Golf Day. Over 100+ individual meetings with members of Congress and their senior staff were held.
- We Are Golf supported the White House's Summer Job+ Program, which was a call to action for businesses, non-profits and government to work together to provide pathways to employment for America's youth in the summer of 2012.
- As of June 2015, 34 states had commissioned state economic impact studies. Texas, Utah and Virginia completed studies also in 2013. An economic impact study for Pennsylvania began in August 2015 and is scheduled to be completed in December 2015.
- By the end of 2015, Golf 20/20 will reach out to all states who have not completed a study to develop a timeline to have an economic impact study completed for all states by December 31, 2019.
- The 6th National Golf Day was held on Capitol Hill on April 16, 2013. The GCSAA BOD, staff and Government Relations Committee held 60+ meetings with Members of Congress.
- In 2013, the We Are Golf coalition exhibited at the National Conference of State Legislatures annual meeting.
- The 7th National Golf Day was held on Capitol Hill on May 21, 2014. The GCSAA delegation held 80+ meetings with Members of Congress and their staff. The meetings focused on the proposed "Waters of the United States" rule and preservation of conservation easements on golf properties.
- During the 7th National Golf Day, GCSAA held strategic meetings with the EPA Office of Water, the White House Office of Economic Council and numerous Senate and House committee chairs.
- In 2014, GCSAA pushed for passage of H.R. 2203 to honor Jack Nicklaus with the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his contributions to our nation.
- In 2014, Charlie Sifford received the Medal of Freedom by the White House. GCSAA supported the nomination through a letter writing campaign.

- The 8th National Golf Day was held on Capitol Hill on April 15, 2015. The GCSAA Board of Directors, staff and Government Relations Committee, and other guests held 75+ meetings with Members of Congress and their staff. The meetings focused on the proposed “Waters of the United States” rule and golf as an environmental steward.
- In 2015, GCSAA’s Government Relations Committee held special group meetings with Senators from the Senate Small Business, Agriculture and Appropriations Committees.
- Florida, Massachusetts, Oregon and Michigan conducted a state golf day in 2015.
- The 9th National Golf Day was held on Capitol Hill on May 18, 2016. The GCSAA Board of Directors, staff and Government Affairs Committee, and other guests held 150+ meetings with Members of Congress and their staff. The meetings focused on labor/business and environmental regulations of concern as well as the PHIT Act. GCSAA brought 60 attendees to National Golf Day including 30 of its Grassroots Ambassadors.
- The golf industry applauded the return of golf to the Olympics in 2016.
- SRI International completed an Economic Impact Study for the state of Pennsylvania in January 2016. The completion of the Pennsylvania study brings the total to 33 studies that have been completed since the program’s inception. Additionally, two studies will begin in the Fall of 2016 with scheduled completion dates in January, 2017: Washington and Iowa.

Position paper: None at this time.

Coalitions/affiliations: We Are Golf -- <http://www.wearegolf.org/>

Water Management

Issue Information:

Water availability, water quality, water rights, water use and water affordability are significant issues for golf courses at all levels of government. Some areas of the U.S. require golf courses to use reclaimed, effluent or other nonpotable water sources for irrigation and it is important that there is access to water suitable for use on turfgrass. Proper management and conservation of water resources is an important issue for golf course management. Efficient water use and water quality management on golf courses requires up-to-date technologies, continuing education, scientific research, and sound management practices by golf course superintendents. Innovations at golf facilities include the use of soil sensors, reclaimed water, sophisticated weather instruments such as weather stations, weather sensors, wetting agents, irrigation controls, VFD pump controls, drought- and salt-resistant grasses, water conservation and water protection practices. Golf facilities are making significant capital investments in these water conservation technologies in order to demonstrate their commitment to environmental stewardship. Many golf course superintendents monitor water quality of streams and groundwater. Golf courses can also have a significant impact on groundwater recharge, especially in suburban areas.

Specific water issues include:

- Water quality - surface and groundwater protection, nutrient loading, non-point source pollution, reclaimed water
- Water quantity - effluent/reclaimed water, drought, conservation of water resources
- Water cost – affordability, tiered pricing

GCSAA position statement:

Golf course superintendents are responsible stewards of water resources. GCSAA supports collaboration with all levels of government to address water use and quality issues and for golf course superintendents to be involved in the construction of productive public policy related to water issues. GCSAA supports water conservation and water quality protection laws and regulations that are based on sound science and credible data and promote the values of turfgrass and professionally managed landscapes. Sound science includes the recognized/accepted science methodologies and practices for research that follow the high standards of the scientific method. These standards include important investigational attributes and practices such as the formulation of a readily testable hypothesis; the use of systematic and well-documented experimental or analytical methods; the application of appropriate data analysis tools (e.g., statistics and mathematical models) to the data; and the articulation of conclusions that address the hypothesis and are supported by the results. Sound science is also reproducible until there are no discrepancies between observations and theory.

GCSAA activity:

- GCSAA actively monitors water issues at all levels of government and supports superintendent efforts to deal with water issues by providing resources through educational programs and through direct efforts with legislators and regulators and the media.
- In 2006, GCSAA developed a state-specific Water Permitting database for members. The database contains information on permitting requirements for each state.
- In 2007, GCSAA launched the Water Use and Conservation Survey, the second survey of the Golf Course Environmental Profile (GCEP). The overall goal of the GCEP is to develop an environmental profile of golf courses. This survey solicited information regarding water use and conservation practices on golf courses throughout the United States. This information will provide baseline data for documenting changes in environmental practices over time, help GCSAA respond to governmental inquiries, and answer the public's questions about environmental issues. Data from the Water Use and Conservation Survey was released in 2008.
- In 2012, GCSAA presented data from the Golf Course Environmental Profile at the USGA Water Summit and several golf course superintendents were featured speakers at the event.
- GCSAA affiliated chapters in states like FL, GA, VA, CO, CT, OR, PA, RI and elsewhere are demonstrating proactive environmental stewardship through the creation and implementation of comprehensive BMP programs and certification.

- In 2013, GCSAA and its chapters throughout the country collaborated with state and local officials to develop practical water management public policy on golf courses. Examples: Superintendents in Texas worked with the Texas Water Conservation Advisory Council to update its golf course water management BMPs; the Minnesota GCSA partnered with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Waters, to redefine water appropriation standards; and superintendents in California began serving on the City of San Diego and Los Angeles water conservation task forces.
- In 2015, GCSAA launched the Water Use and Conservation Survey, the first survey of the second phase of the Golf Course Environmental Profile.
 - Results of the Water Use and Conservation Survey were released in 2016.

Coalitions/affiliations:

U.S. EPA Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program
 Irrigation Association
 WaterReuse Association
 Waters Advocacy Coalition

Water quality (sub-issue)

Issue Information:

Water quality is a critical issue for golf facilities for both surface water and groundwater. Golf courses serve as important water treatment systems. Healthy turfgrass is a filter that traps and holds pollutants in place; courses actually serve as catch basins for residential and industrial runoff; many courses are effective disposal sites for effluent wastewater and have agreements with local municipalities for this purpose. Modern turfgrass management practices greatly reduce the potential for leaching or runoff into water supplies. Independent university research supports the fact that well-managed golf courses do not pose significant risks to environmental quality, wildlife or human health.

Some areas of the U.S. require golf courses to use reclaimed, effluent or other nonpotable water sources for irrigation and it is important that there is access to water suitable for use on turfgrass. Many golf course superintendents monitor water quality of streams and groundwater. Golf courses can also have a significant impact on groundwater recharge, especially in suburban areas. The turfgrass system acts as a living filter for reclaimed wastewater as measured by the leachate that percolates below the rootzone. This leachate helps with the recharging of aquifers.

In April 2014, the U.S. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers issued a proposed rule that would redefine “waters of the United States” under all Clean Water Act (CWA) programs. The proposed regulation broadens the scope of CWA jurisdiction beyond constitutional and statutory limits established by Congress and recognized by the Supreme Court. In addition to raising serious legal issues, the proposed rule fails to provide clarity or predictability, and raises practical concerns with regard to how the rule will be implemented. The proposed rule will result in duplicative and incongruent regulatory requirements that are inconsistent with the purpose and structure of the CWA and have not been adequately considered by the agencies. The EPA and Army Corps of Engineers made final the Clean Water Rule on August 28, 2015. On August 27, 2015, a federal district judge in North Dakota put a halt to the rule in 13 states. In 2015, over 31 states filed lawsuits against the EPA and Corps finalization of the rule. Congress also spent 2015 working on passing legislation to stop the rule.

The WOTUS rule has been put on hold nationwide and it has been decided the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals has jurisdiction over a case to decide the fate of the Clean Water Rule. Litigation will play out during 2017.

GCSAA position statement:

GCSAA supports water quality protection laws and regulations that are based on sound science and credible data and promote the benefits of turfgrass and professionally managed landscapes. Sound science includes the recognized/accepted science methodologies and practices for research that follow the high standards of the scientific method. These standards include important investigational attributes and practices such as the formulation of a readily testable hypothesis; the use of systematic and well-documented experimental or analytical methods; the application of appropriate data analysis tools (e.g., statistics and mathematical models) to the data; and the articulation of conclusions that address the

hypothesis and are supported by the results. Sound science is also reproducible until there are no discrepancies between observations and theory.

GCSAA supports the use of reclaimed, effluent or other non-potable water for golf course irrigation when the water quality is suitable for plant growth and there are no public health implications. GCSAA does not support mandated use of reclaimed water when the water quality or water quantity is not adequate, when use is not cost effective or when the golf course superintendent does not play a key role in the decision-making process for the development of effluent water standards.

Properly maintained turfgrass provides many community benefits including: critical "greenspaces"; habitat for birds and other wildlife; temperature buffer, recreational opportunities; capture of run-off pollutants in stormwater, and carbon sequestration and oxygen production. In addition, many entities both public and private rely on healthy greenscapes such as golf courses as a key component in maintaining financial revenues.

GCSAA does not support Congress, EPA or the Army Corps of Engineers expanding the jurisdictional reach of the federal Clean Water Act. This would be an unprecedented expansion of the regulatory authority of the federal government. Expanded federal jurisdiction would pre-empt traditional state and local government authority over land and water use decisions and alter the balance of federal and state authority. Increased delays in securing permits will raise costs of and impede many economic activities.

GCSAA activity:

- GCSAA's philanthropic organization, The Environmental Institute for Golf, and the United States Golf Association began funding a research project in 2006 to measure the impact of golf courses on surface and ground water. "A Critical Review of Water Quality Impacts by Golf Courses: Update and Trends," is a continuation of a previous national assessment published in the November 1997 issue of *Golf Course Management* and the *Journal of Environmental Quality*. The objective is to collect as much data as possible from golf facilities that are conducting surface and/or ground water monitoring projects and publish a critical review of the quality of surface and ground water as affected by golf courses.
- In 2007, members of GCSAA's water task groups completed development of a Water Fact Sheet to be distributed to recycled water suppliers to encourage them to take the necessary steps to ensure proper water quality for healthy turfgrass cultivation.
- In July 2011, GCSAA submitted comments to EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on their draft guidance for determining whether a waterway, water body, or wetland is protected by the Clean Water Act.
- During 2014, GCSAA lobbied in opposition to the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers' proposed Clean Water Rule that would make nearly every drop of water on a golf course property come under federal jurisdiction.
 - GCSAA formed a golf industry stakeholder team including architects and builders to respond to the WOTUS rule.
 - GCSAA conducted extensive direct lobbying and grassroots lobbying with a goal to have EPA withdraw the rule and work with stakeholders to develop a better proposal.
 - GCSAA joined the Waters Advocacy Coalition along with six other leading golf organizations.
 - In November 2014, the golf industry submitted formal comments on the WOTUS rule.
 - GCSAA supported passage of H.R. 5078, which the House passed on September 9, 2014.
- During 2015, GCSAA lobbied in opposition to the Clean Water Rule including:
 - GCSAA supported passage of H.R. 1732 (Regulatory Integrity Protection Act of 2015) and S. 1140 (Federal Water Quality Protection Act).
 - GCSAA hosted a Clean Water Rule webinar on July 28 with WAC attorney Deidre Duncan.
 - GCSAA participated on the WAC's WOTUS implementation subgroup.
 - GCSAA met with EPA to discuss the impact of the WOTUS rule on golf properties.

Position paper:

CWA Definition of "Waters of the U.S." comments filed with the U.S. EPA on July 31, 2011.

Comments on file with the EPA related to Total Maximum Daily Loads and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permitting requirements.

Filed comments on November 14, 2014 with EPA on the proposed "Waters of the United States" rule.

Coalitions/affiliations:

U.S. EPA Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program

WaterReuse Association

Waters Advocacy Coalition

Water quantity (sub-issue)

Issue Information:

Among the most important issues facing the future of the game of golf is that of water use. Golf courses rely on water to irrigate the landscape on which the game is played. Often, golf courses are highly visible features in communities and are targets for criticism during periods of drought when homeowners and others are restricted in their use of potable water.

The Golf Course Environmental Profile (GCEP) Water Use and Conservation Survey showed that golf facilities nationally account for one-half of one percent of all water withdrawn annually and just one and one half percent of all irrigated water applied. In 2014, U.S. golf course superintendents were using 21.8 percent less water on average and just 1.44 percent of all irrigated water in the U.S. to maintain their courses. The 2014 Water Use and Conservation Practices on U.S. Golf Courses survey results, phase 2 of the GCEP, were from more than 1,900 golf course superintendents. The study shows us that the golf industry has been addressing water issues for an extended period of time and is realizing positive results.

Golf facilities must proactively conserve water. Conserving water on golf facilities is essential to becoming a sustainable business. Optimizing the acreage of irrigated turfgrass, implementing best management practices, utilizing technology to make water application decisions, conducting an irrigation system audit along with an audit of the non-golf course water uses at the entire facility are key to becoming responsible users of water. The golf industry takes steps to responsibly use water and reduce the reliance on potable water.

- Superintendents utilize information from multiple sources as part of their decision to apply water. Most facilities utilize direct observations of turfgrass and soil conditions, with approximately 35% routinely using evapotranspiration data.
- Utilizing improved grasses that rely on less water.
- New irrigation system technologies.
- Irrigation best management practices.
- Alternate water sources.

GCSAA position statement:

GCSAA supports water conservation and the utilization of irrigation/water use best management practices (BMPs). GCSAA supports golf facilities utilizing irrigation system audits as a means to increase the effectiveness of the irrigation system and conserve water. GCSAA supports active collaboration with state and local officials to enact appropriate drought restrictions. GCSAA supports the creation and use of written drought management plans by golf facilities that are subject to drought cycles.

Regulatory agencies and golf courses should work together to develop conservation plans and BMPs. Regulations need to be based on sound science. Sound science includes the recognized/accepted science methodologies and practices for research that follow the high standards of the scientific method. These standards include important investigational attributes and practices such as the formulation of a readily testable hypothesis; the use of systematic and well-documented experimental or analytical methods; the application of appropriate data analysis tools (e.g., statistics and mathematical models) to the data; and the articulation of conclusions that address the hypothesis and are supported by the results. Sound science is also reproducible until there are no discrepancies between observations and theory. Regulatory agencies need to look at golf courses as small businesses and important members of the community.

Properly maintained turfgrass provides many community benefits including: critical "greenspaces"; habitat for birds and other wildlife; recreational opportunities; temperature buffer; capture of run-off pollutants in

stormwater; and carbon sequestration and oxygen production. In addition, many entities both public and private rely on healthy turfgrass as a key component in maintaining financial revenues.

Golf facilities should continue to take advantage of technology as part of the irrigation decision-making process to conserve water. The utilization of data from soil sensors for irrigation scheduling decisions is likely to increase in the future as the equipment becomes more reliable and affordable.

GCSAA activity:

- In 2009, GCSAA responded through public comments to EPA's possible expansion of the WaterSense program into the commercial and institutional sector as well as draft specifications for water-efficient single-family new homes.
- In 2014, GCSAA's CEO Rhett Evans was a keynote speaker at the Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas.
- In 2014, GCSAA chapters and field staff in California took a lead role in establishing a series of water conservation task forces between the golf industry and water purveyors in the state including in the cities of San Diego, Los Angeles, Sacramento and the Coachella Valley. This work continued in 2015 as California's Governor issued a mandatory statewide drought resolution ordering a 20% reduction in water use in the state.

Position paper:

WaterSense comments filed with the U.S. EPA on September 18, 2009.

WaterSense comments filed with the U.S. EPA on July 7, 2009.

Coalitions/affiliations:

U.S. EPA Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program

Irrigation Association