

**CITIZENS
CAMPAIGN**
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



www.citizenscampaign.org

- ☐ 225A Main Street • Farmingdale, NY 11735
516-390-7150
- ☐ 188 East Post Road, Suite #404 • White Plains, NY 10601
914-358-9840
- ☐ 744 Broadway • Albany, NY 12207
518-772-1862
- ☐ 733 Delaware Road, Box 140 • Buffalo, NY 14223
716-831-3206
- ☐ 466 Westcott Street, 2nd Floor • Syracuse, NY 13210
315-472-1339
- ☐ 2404 Whitney Avenue, 2nd Floor • Hamden, CT 06518
203-821-7050

Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

MEMO OF SUPPORT

Reducing Phosphorous Use on Lawns

HB 254

AN ACT Restricting the Application of Fertilizers that contain Phosphate.

BACKGROUND

Phosphorus that is discharged to surface waters contributes to eutrophication, or nutrient enrichment, resulting in excessive growth of green plants, including algae. As these plants die off and decompose, they decrease oxygen levels, cause fish kills, disturb recreational opportunities, and increase the cost of sewage treatment. By the late 1960's, the scientific community determined that phosphorus was the primary cause of eutrophication of thousands of water bodies. As a result, phosphorus was removed from laundry detergent, which led to significant improvements to water quality in our lakes, rivers, and streams. However, in recent years, eutrophication has again become a problem, and the US Environmental Protection Agency asserts that phosphates in dishwashing fertilizers continue to be a major problem where they are not regulated.

JUSTIFICATION

Overloading of nutrients, including phosphorous, is the cause of 40 impairment concerns on Connecticut's list of impaired waterbodies. Phosphorus from lawn fertilizers significantly contributes to water quality impairments in the Long Island Sound. According to a study by the U.S. Geological Survey, concentrations of phosphorus in runoff from lawns in which phosphorus fertilizer was applied were twice the concentrations of lawns that had no fertilizer or phosphorus free fertilizer applied. In most cases, lawns do not need additional phosphorus to maintain healthy turf.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

- Prohibits the use of phosphate fertilizer on established lawns. Established lawn is any area of ground that is covered with any species of grass for two or more growing seasons and that is customarily kept mowed.
- Prohibits the use of phosphate fertilizer on any lawn from November 15th - April 1st
- Prohibits the use phosphate fertilizer on any lawn located 20 feet or less from any body of water.
- Sellers will separately display non-phosphate & phosphate fertilizer.
- Sellers will display a sign in front of phosphate fertilizers.
- The Commissioner of Agriculture can adopt regulations to implement the provisions of this section.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS HB 254 REDUCING PHOSPHOROUS USE ON LAWNS

Citizens Campaign for the Environment is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to protect public health and the environment.

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