
SENATE BILL 6289

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senators Pridemore, Brandland, and Marr

Read first time 01/11/10. Referred to Committee on Environment, Water & Energy.

1 AN ACT Relating to protecting lake water quality by reducing
2 phosphorus from lawn fertilizers; and adding a new chapter to Title 90
3 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

6 (a) Phosphorus loading of surface waters can stimulate the growth
7 of weeds and algae and that this growth can have adverse environmental,
8 health, and aesthetic effects;

9 (b) Lawn fertilizers contribute to phosphorus loading. Limits on
10 turf fertilizer containing phosphorus can significantly reduce the
11 discharge of phosphorus into the state's ground and surface waters;

12 (c) Turf fertilizers containing no or very low amounts of
13 phosphorus are readily available and maintaining established turf in a
14 healthy and green condition is not dependent upon the addition of
15 phosphorus fertilizers; and

16 (d) While significant reductions of phosphorus from laundry
17 detergent and dishwashing detergent have been achieved, similar
18 progress in reducing phosphorus contributions from turf fertilizer has
19 not been accomplished.

1 (2) It is the intent of the legislature that this chapter
2 significantly limit the use of fertilizers containing the plant
3 nutrient phosphorus.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
5 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

6 (1) "Department" means the department of ecology.

7 (2) "Director" means the director of the department of ecology.

8 (3)(a) "Fertilizer" includes any substance containing one or more
9 recognized plant nutrients, and that is either used for its plant
10 nutrient content or is designated for use or claimed to have value in
11 promoting plant growth, or both. "Fertilizer" includes gypsum and
12 manipulated animal and vegetable manures.

13 (b) "Fertilizer" does not include:

14 (i) Unmanipulated animal and vegetable manures and other products
15 exempted by the department by rule;

16 (ii) Calcium carbonate (lime) and anhydrous ammonia; and

17 (iii) Materials including, but not limited to, compost biosolids,
18 municipal sewage sludge, or slow release fertilizer used in compliance
19 with best practices developed by the Washington State University
20 extension service, or products derived therefrom, that are regulated
21 under chapter 70.95 or 70.95J RCW or rules adopted under those
22 chapters.

23 (4) "Impervious surface" means a highway, street, sidewalk, parking
24 lot, driveway, or other artificial surface that prevents infiltration
25 of water into the soil.

26 (5) "Turf" means noncrop land planted in closely mowed, managed
27 grasses on residential property. Turf does not include managed
28 pasture, hayland, hay, turf grown on turf farms, home or commercial
29 vegetable production, horticultural beds, flower beds, general
30 landscaping, or any other form of agricultural production.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of
32 this section, after January 1, 2012, a person may not apply to turf a
33 fertilizer containing the plant nutrient phosphorus.

34 (2) Subsection (1) of this section does not apply when:

35 (a) Applying a solid fertilizer containing less than 0.67 percent

1 phosphate by weight or a liquid fertilizer applied at a rate not
2 greater than 0.3 pounds of phosphate per one thousand square feet of
3 turf;

4 (b) Laboratory test results or other certification by a turf
5 specialist is performed within the three years previous to the
6 application indicates that the level of available phosphorus in the
7 soil is insufficient to support healthy turf growth, and the test
8 results or certification, and the application rate, are consistent with
9 standards set by best available science in consultation with the
10 Washington State University extension service; or

11 (c) The property owner or an agent of the property owner is first
12 establishing turf via seed or sod procedures and only during the first
13 growing season.

14 (3)(a) This section does not apply to the application of turf
15 fertilizer for agricultural uses.

16 (b) This section does not apply to the application of turf
17 fertilizer for golf courses.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A person may not apply a fertilizer to an
19 impervious surface. Fertilizer released on an impervious surface must
20 be immediately contained and either legally applied to turf or another
21 legal site or returned to the original container or another appropriate
22 container.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The department may issue a notice of
24 corrective action to a person in violation of section 3 or 4 of this
25 act.

26 (2) A city or county may adopt an ordinance providing for
27 enforcement of the requirements of sections 3 and 4 of this act. A
28 city or county adopting an ordinance has jurisdiction concurrent with
29 the department to enforce this section.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The department may produce consumer
31 information on the application restrictions under section 3 of this act
32 and on recommended best practices for turf fertilizer and other
33 residential landscaping uses. The consumer information must be
34 produced in consultation with the Washington State University extension
35 service, fertilizer industry representatives, lakes health

1 organizations, and other interested parties. The consumer information
2 must be in a format and of a content suitable for posting and
3 distribution at retail points of sale of fertilizer that contains
4 phosphorus for use on turf.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 1 through 6 of this act constitute
6 a new chapter in Title 90 RCW.

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