



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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NYSDEC Reminds New Yorkers Of State Law Restricting Use Of Lawn Fertilizers Containing Phosphorus

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| ISSUE: **ENVIRONMENT**

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The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is urging New Yorkers to be mindful of a new state law that limits the percentage of phosphorus in lawn fertilizers and restricts the time of year and locations where fertilizers can be used. The fertilizer provisions of the NYS Dishwasher Detergent and Nutrient Runoff Law went into effect on January 1.

The new restrictions, affecting those who want to fertilize their lawns this spring, will reduce the quantity of phosphorus entering the state's waters, diminishing the degradation to ponds, rivers, lakes and streams.

Under the new provisions of the law, the use of phosphorus fertilizer on lawns or non-agricultural turf is restricted. Only lawn fertilizer with less than 0.67 percent by weight phosphate content may be applied legally. Application of any fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphorus or potassium on lawns or non-agricultural turf is prohibited between December 1 and April 1. Application of any fertilizer on lawns or non-agricultural turf within 20 feet of a water body or on paved surfaces is restricted. Retailers must display phosphorus fertilizer separately from phosphorus-free fertilizer and must post signs notifying customers of the terms of the law.

Phosphorus is carried to ponds, rivers, lakes and streams from lawn areas by stormwater runoff. Phosphorus in water has been linked to reductions in oxygen necessary for fish to breathe, algae that turn waterbodies green and algae and algae by-products that degrade drinking water.

Over 70 waterbodies used for drinking water, fisheries or recreation in New York are impaired or negatively affected due to phosphorus including: portions of Lake Ontario, Lake Champlain, Onondaga Lake, New York City drinking water reservoirs, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and many other smaller ponds and lakes.

Phosphorus-impaired waters can negatively impact recreation and tourism, an important component of local economies. Protecting drinking water from phosphorus' effects can be costly.

Municipalities that are located within watersheds of impaired waters must meet regulatory limits on total phosphorus entering the water from all sources, especially stormwater runoff. Storm sewer system retrofits (improvements to the system) to remove phosphorus from stormwater can cost millions of dollars per system.

Find the full text of the NYS Dishwasher Detergent and Nutrient Runoff Law, Frequently Asked Questions, and a downloadable sign for retail display on DEC's website at:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/67239.html>.

- [Frequently Asked Questions about Lawn Fertilizer requirements](#)
- [Fertilizer newsletter article - help others learn about these requirements by using this information in your organization's newsletter \(PDF\) \(70 KB\)](#)
- [Important information for Pesticide Applicators and commercial permittees](#)
- [Lawn Fertilizer Educational Sign for Retailers \(color\) \(PDF\) \(133 KB\)](#)
- [Lawn Fertilizer Educational Sign for Retailers \(black and white\) \(PDF\) \(121 KB\)](#)
- [Text of Lawn Fertilizer Law](#)