

# Fact Sheet on Phosphorous Fertilizer Legislation

## Spokane Riverkeeper Rick Eichstaedt in conjunction with the Washington Lake Protection Association

Please support Senate Bill 6289 and its companion bill HB 2744, protecting lake water quality by reducing phosphorus from lawn fertilizers. The chemical industry has mounted a strong campaign encouraging you not to support it, but I am here to tell you why you should support it.

Our lakes and rivers are under incredible stress from excess phosphorus sources. It causes all kinds of water quality issues such as increased aquatic plant growth, decreased dissolved oxygen levels and increased algae blooms.

This bill is good for Washington waters:

- You do not need phosphorus to control lawn disease.**

The opposition says that by limited phosphorus you encourage ringspot disease in lawns. This is not true. Washington State University states that ringspots are caused by too much or too little water and not too little phosphorus.

- By taking phosphorus out of fertilizer you control a difficult source of pollution.**

The opposition states that phosphorus is actually coming from other sources like pet waste, septic, and decaying leaves. That is true, BUT the actual amounts coming from these sources are not quantified and they are all sources which are very hard to control. However, taking phosphorus (which isn't even needed) out of lawn fertilizer is an effective way to reduce the amount reaching lakes and rivers. It also helps all the companies who are charged with trying to reach prescribed phosphorus levels such as Inland Paper Company and Avista, both are companies that support this bill.

The science shows that decreasing phosphorus in fertilizer protects our water quality. A study in Michigan has seen a decrease up to 28% in phosphorus in stormwater runoff thanks to the ban in place.

- Soil tests can cost as little as \$30.**

The opposition is saying that the soil tests are cost prohibitive to citizens. This is simply not true. There are plenty of labs that run soil tests for around \$30. The bill only asks for a soil test when a resident wants to apply fertilizer containing phosphorus. People can use the phosphorus-free fertilizers according to label application rates without a soil

test.

**•Plenty of phosphorus in soil and when extra is applied, it runs off.**

It has been show that Washington soils generally have plenty of phosphorus in the soil. When a soil has enough phosphorus, extra phosphorus can not be bound to the soil particles and with watering of the lawn the excess phosphorus just runs into the nearest lake, river, or storm drain.

**•Established lawns don't need phosphorus.**

Established lawns are desired for the beautiful green color, and that comes from the additional nitrogen not phosphorus.

Thank you for your time and consideration – I urge you to support Senate Bill 6289 and its companion House Bill 2744.