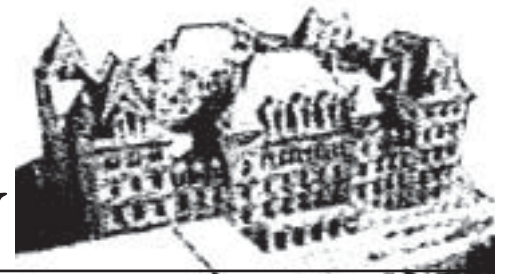


# Turfgrass Advocacy

2008



New York State Turfgrass Association • February 13, 2008

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## Background

Counties are beginning to discuss regulation of the application of fertilizer. Suffolk County has passed a law (Resolution No. 2117-2007) and regulations are being considered in Westchester County. These local regulations are being discussed erroneously with the belief that if fertilizer is not applied then the quality of drinking water will improve. However, science does not support this theory. Local regulations many times are not governed by sound science. They do not recognize the professional expertise of the industry and are impractical to enforce. Legislation is being drafted that New York State, through the Department of Agriculture and Markets, will regulate the application of fertilizer using science-based information.

## NYSTA PERSPECTIVE

These regulations are not based on sound science.

A Penn State University study showed thick lawns slow the velocity of run-off and allow the water to infiltrate; 15 times better from a high quality lawn than from a patchy lawn with a lot of weeds.

An average lawn allows a run-off rate of about half a gallon a minute during peak rainfall. By comparison, 7.5 gallons a minute of run-off water may occur on a lawn that is thinly seeded and has bare areas.

Research results showed that the amount of phosphorus in run-off from lawns without phosphorus fertilizer was significantly higher than from lawns fertilized with phosphorus (Petrovic).

Local regulation will create a patchwork of differing fertilizer application requirements from municipality to municipality, that will make it very costly and difficult for applicators to achieve compliance.

Local governments, many times, do not have the scientific or environmental expertise to create and enforce local fertilizer regulations. If such programs are created at the local level, the costs of a fertilizer regulation program could cause local taxes to increase.

## RECOMMENDATION

Ask the legislature to support legislation providing "pre-emption" to the state for fertilizer application and use through the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.