

# Minnesota's Lawn Phosphorus Fertilizer Law

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Governor Ventura signed SF 1555, the Phosphorus Fertilizer Bill, into state law April 19, 2002. There are a couple provisions that will directly apply to the Minnesota greenhouse industry and garden centers. Note below that we are able to apply fertilizers for the growing of crops. Also note that

spilling of phosphorus must be cleaned up immediately. My initial 'take' on this is that this may impact applying fertilizers through an irrigation system with plant materials on an impervious surface such as in some garden centers. Beyond this, the only other impact, as I

read it, will be on what fertilizer products can be sold through our garden centers. I suggest that any garden center owner consider making a fact sheet for consumers. Feel free to cut and paste from this article to make your own. I will send a fact sheet out appropriate for consumers as a FAX

during the next 2 weeks as well.

For official interpretations, contact Jerry Spetzman at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 651-297-7269. For full bill text, go to: [www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/legis.htm](http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/legis.htm) and enter "SF1555" under Senate bill information.

- **PREEMPTION OF LOCAL LAW – Starts August 1, 2002**

Local units of government may not adopt ordinances regulating the sale, handling or use of phosphorus fertilizers for the growing of crops (agricultural use).

Local units of government may not adopt ordinances regulating the sale, handling or use of phosphorus fertilizers for the growing of turf except for the following exception:

Exception: Local ordinances that regulate the sale of phosphorus lawn fertilizer that are in effect by August 1, 2002 will be allowed to stand.

- **FERTILIZER APPLICATION TO IMPERVIOUS SURFACES – Starts August 1, 2002**

Do not spill or spread fertilizer on impervious surfaces (paved areas such as sidewalks, driveways, and streets). Clean up immediately if you do. This applies to all fertilizer, whether it contains phosphorus or not.

- **PHOSPHORUS LAWN FERTILIZER USE RESTRICTIONS - Starts January 1, 2004**

Lawn fertilizer is restricted to 0% phosphate (P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>) content in the seven county Twin Cities metro area, 3% phosphate (P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>) content in other areas of the state unless it is for a new lawn, or a soil or tissue test shows a

phosphorus need. In those cases, lawn fertilizers with higher phosphate content can be used. (Note: The phosphorus (P) content of fertilizer is measured as phosphate (P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>). The phosphorus content of phosphate is 43%.)

Golf course staff that have been certified by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture can use phosphorus fertilizer according to their professional judgment.

Local units of governments outside the seven county Twin Cities metro area can adopt the 0% phosphate limit, but need to inform the Minnesota Department of Agriculture of the change.

When applied, phosphorus lawn fertilizer needs to follow rates recommended by the University of Minnesota and approved by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

- **CONSUMER INFORMATION:** Needs to be provided by Minnesota Department of Agriculture in consultation with University of Minnesota, fertilizer industry, lake groups, and others.
- **RESEARCH EVALUATION:** Needs to be done MN Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the University of Minnesota and consultation with fertilizer industry, lake groups, and others.
- **ENFORCEMENT:** Local units of government will do enforcement under their existing authority. Violations are petty misdemeanors.