

The objective of Senate Bill 6289 / HB 2744 is to reduce phosphorus in lawn fertilizer used by citizens and industry of Washington State to protect our aquatic resources.

History and Problems related to Fertilizers containing the element Phosphorus:

- Phosphorus loading of surface waters can stimulate growth of weeds and algae. Excessive plant and algae growth can adversely impact water quality, impede lake recreation, and affect lake aesthetics. Additional algae growth may also threaten the health of people, pets and wildlife.
- Turf fertilizers are known to contribute to phosphorus loading of the aquatic environment, and limits on turf fertilizer containing phosphorus can significantly reduce the discharge of phosphorus into the state's ground and surface waters.
- This ban would not affect agriculture, golf courses, new turf, or areas for which soil tests show that P is deficient.
- Other states have passed similar legislation to deal with fertilizer containing phosphorus to protect their natural waters. The states include: Maine, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Florida.
- In Washington State, local municipalities have taken the initiative to pass local ordinances to control the application of fertilizer containing phosphorus; Whatcom County and Liberty Lake Water and Sewer District (2005), while King County passed a very similar ordinance to the proposed state bill in 2009.
- Phosphorus is not needed for a healthy established lawn, it's the nitrogen in fertilizer that promotes greenness in lawn grass.
- The bill states that after January 1, 2012, a person may not apply fertilizer containing the plant nutrient phosphorus to established lawns, unless soils are shown to be deficient.
 - Also declares a person may not apply a fertilizer to an impervious surface. Fertilizer released on an impervious surface must be immediately contained and either legally applied to turf or any other legal site or returned to the original or other appropriate container.
 - Allows a city or county to adopt an ordinance providing for enforcement of the requirements of this act.
 - Support from all different groups/agencies – Avista Utilities, Inland Paper Company, King County, Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District, Spokane River Keeper, Puget Sound Keeper, Save Lake Sammamish and People for Puget Sound