



Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

Serving Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Ms. Terry Joseph, West Florida RPC
Mr. Charles Blume, Apalachee RPC
Mr. Scott Koons, North Central Florida RPC
Mr. Brian Teeple, Northeast Florida RPC
Mr. Michael Moehlman, Withlacoochee RPC
Mr. Philip Laurien, East Central RPC
Ms. Patricia Steed, Central Florida RPC
Mr. Manny Pumariega, Tampa Bay RPC
Mr. Michael Busha, Treasure Coast RPC
Ms. Carolyn Dekle, South Florida RPC
Mayor Harvey Goldberg, City of Punta Gorda
Mayor John Sullivan, City of Cape Coral
Chair Fred Coyle, Collier County BOCC
Chair Robert Popoff, City of Marco Island
Mayor Sammy Hamilton, Jr., City of Everglades City
Chair Russell Echols, Glades County BOCC
Mayor Bret Whidden, City of Moore Haven
Chair Janet Taylor, Hendry County BOCC
Mayor Paul Puletti, City of LaBelle
Mayor Mali Chamness, City of Clewiston

DATE: November 18, 2010

FROM: Councilman Mick Denham, Chair - Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

RE: Benefits of Local Government Fertilizer Ordinances

On March 15, 2007 the South Florida Regional Planning Council in coordination with member local governments, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, (FDEP), the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the University of Florida and the Institute of Food and Agricultural Services Cooperative Extension developed and adopted a Resolution supporting the regulated use of fertilizers containing nitrogen and/or phosphorus within Southwest Florida. The resolution provided specific recommendations and guidelines to be considered by local government jurisdictions for the regulation and control of fertilizer

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application. To date in Southwest Florida, three counties and eight municipalities have adopted strict fertilizer ordinances. Three other municipalities are considering and reviewing draft fertilizer ordinances in our region. Statewide approximately 50 local government jurisdictions (cities and counties) have adopted a local government fertilizer ordinance at least as protective as the state model ordinance developed by the FDEP.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has developed a Model Fertilizer Ordinance and the associated documents for use by local governments. The SWFRPC supports continued efforts by the state to have all local governments adopt fertilizer ordinances to protect water quality and our regional economy.

We are writing this letter to encourage you to consider, develop and adopt a local government fertilizer ordinance at least as protective as the 2010 state model ordinance developed by the FDEP.

There are many beneficial reasons to adopt a fertilizer ordinance for your community.

✓ Cost Savings

- It is much less expensive to prevent fertilizers from entering the surface waters of southwest Florida than to remove excess nutrients after they get into natural waterbodies. Basically a dollar of prevention is worth \$294 of clean-up of phosphorous nutrient pollution alone (see the attached example provided by Lee County *).
- Reduced use of man-made fertilizers is less expensive to the homeowner from reduced spending on the fertilizers and costs of application.
- Reduced use of man-made fertilizers reduces water use for lawn irrigation reducing water bills.

✓ Better Lawns and Yards

- Reduced use of man-made fertilizers reduces the prevalence of lawn "burning" from excess nutrients and the associated pest species that take advantage of the damaged lawn.
- Less-fertilized plants are hardier to water stress, such as drought.
- Non-fertilized and less fertilized areas do not have chemical soil imbalances that can damage broad-leaved shrubs and trees.

✓ Improvement of Property Values

- Using proper landscaping techniques with less fertilizer can effectively increase the value of a property while benefiting the environment. Attractive, water-efficient, low maintenance landscapes can increase property values between 7 to 14 percent, according to USEPA (1993).

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✓ Reduced Energy Use and Cost

- Reduced use of man-made fertilizers decreases energy use for irrigation, mowing, fertilizer manufacturing, and less fossil fuels used in transport to site, powered equipment use on-site, and disposal of yard waste.

✓ Improved Water Quality

- Reduced fertilizer use has been shown to improve water quality in receiving waters by reducing dissolved ammonia, nitrate, and nitrite concentrations.
- Reduced fertilizer use has been shown to improve water quality in receiving waters by reducing dissolved phosphate concentrations.
- Reduced fertilizer use has been shown to reduce leaching of dissolved phosphate, dissolved ammonia, nitrate, and nitrite into shallow and surficial aquifers.
- Reduced fertilizer use has been shown to reduce eutrophication of natural and man-made lakes and ponds.

✓ Better Fishing

- Reduced fertilizer use has improved fisheries in receiving fresh, estuarine and marine waters by reducing harmful algae bloom growth.
- Reduced fertilizer use has improved water-based tourism and recreational fishing by reducing harmful algae bloom growth, filamentous green algae growth; drift algae growth, and blue green algae growth.
- Reduced fertilizer use has improved fisheries habitat by reducing dissolved chlorophyll, which improves water clarity over seagrass beds.

✓ Better for Us, Our Pets, and Wildlife

- Reduced safe fertilizer use has reduced the probability of toxic reactions to fertilizer for domestic dogs, domestic cats, and wildlife.
- Reduced safe fertilizer use has reduced the incidence of rashes, skin reactions and respiratory problems in susceptible humans.

Please consider developing and adopting a local government fertilizer ordinance that is at least as protective as the 2010 state model ordinance developed by the FDEP, in order to protect the valuable natural, economic, and human resources of your jurisdiction and of southwest Florida.

CC: Mike Thomas, Ph.D., P.E., FDEP - Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration