



September 30, 2011

**New England Governors' Conference Committee on the Environment
Joint Statement of Intent
Reducing Nutrient Pollution through Voluntary Turf Fertilizer Guidelines**

A significant number of the lakes, rivers, streams and estuaries throughout New England fail to meet national water quality standards due to nutrient overloading. As the commissioners of the New England state regulatory agencies charged with restoring water bodies to federally-mandated fishable, swimmable and drinkable status, we all agree that nutrient pollution reductions must continue to come not only from sources such as sanitary wastewater treatment facilities, but also from what is often the largest source of this problem – “non-point source” pollution. Non-point source pollution includes lawn run-off, inadequate and failing septic systems, and other sources. Our agencies are continuing to evaluate innovative approaches that not only address non-point sources of pollution in the most cost-effective manner, but that also have the potential to increase public understanding of the impacts of everyday living on water quality. Such innovation is increasingly important due to the staggering costs inherent in removing nutrients from the heavily-regulated municipal wastewater facilities via advanced treatment, and because focusing only on these large point sources will not by itself achieve our end-goals. We all agree that it can be cost-effective to prevent pollution at its source through collaborative approaches and by engaging our citizens. Vermont has taken steps to control nutrient pollution through restrictions on the sale of turf fertilizers containing phosphorous and nitrogen and believes that its program will be enhanced by this regional and collaborative effort.

As the members of the New England Governors' Conference Committee on the Environment, we are committed to taking a regional approach to addressing nutrient pollution from turf fertilizer used in non-agricultural applications, including on residential and commercial lawns. This source of pollution can account for a significant percentage of the nutrients entering our surface waters. Our regional approach will be to collectively work with turf fertilizer producers and retailers, commercial lawn care professionals, and other stakeholders to develop *voluntary guidelines* pertaining to the formulation, sale, and application of turf fertilizer. Based on results achieved through implementation of similar guidelines elsewhere, a meaningful reduction in nutrient loading in surface waters is achievable if these practices are implemented in areas where lawns are prevalent.

Based on preliminary conversations that we have had with the nation's largest manufacturer/distributor of turf fertilizers, we are optimistic that the key industry stakeholders will participate in this voluntary approach in good faith. We have asked the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC), our regional association of state water pollution programs, to play a coordinating role in this effort. We have also been partnering


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closely with the New England office of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and will continue to do so. In developing our voluntary guidelines, we will closely evaluate the approaches being used by other states. We recognize the importance of working with industry representatives and other stakeholders throughout this process so that we develop guidelines which can and will be implemented across New England. In the late fall of 2011, senior staff from our agencies will convene a meeting of the appropriate stakeholders so that development of the guidelines can begin in earnest.

This voluntary initiative to reduce nutrient pollution from turf fertilizers is an important component of achieving surface water quality goals in all of our states.



Kenneth Kimmell, Commissioner
MA Department of Environmental Protection
Chair, NEGC Committee on the Environment



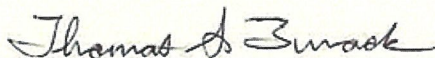
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VT Department of Environmental Conservation



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