Memorandum of Support

April 16, 2018

A.10276 (Englebright)/S.8170 (Hannon)

Title: An Act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law in relation to the sale or use of nitrogen fertilizer.

Provisions: A.10276/S.8170 would require that all non-agriculture fertilizer sold and used in Nassau and Suffolk County contain no more than 12% nitrogen by weight. This bill would go into effect December 31, 2019.

Statement in Support: Overdependence on and misuse of manufactured fertilizers and pesticides (meaning insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc.) has polluted our air and water, dramatically increased energy consumption in agricultural production, reduced pollinator populations, induced increased pest resistance in crops, and increased human and animal morbidity and mortality. One area where we can make an immediate difference is by reducing the use of lawn fertilizers – a known and significant contributor to excess nitrogen in our water.

A.10276/S.8170 would limit the excess nitrogen found in many non-agricultural fertilizers entering the waterways of Long Island. The bill would require that starting on December 31, 2019, all non-agricultural fertilizer sold and used in Suffolk and Nassau Counties contain no more than 12% nitrogen by weight.

By eliminating excessive nitrogen in the waterways, Long Islanders will see a reduction in the presence of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) in marine and freshwater environments – one of the disastrous side effects of excess nitrogen in the environment. As the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) outlines, significant increases in algae harm water quality, food resources and habitats of wildlife, but also decrease the oxygen that fish and other aquatic life need to survive. Large algae blooms often lead to illnesses and large fish kills (fish die-offs). Additionally, large amounts of nitrogen pollution in ground water can be harmful to drinking water sources, even in low levels.¹

A.10276/S.8170 will address one of the main threats to Long Island’s water resources by limiting the amount of nitrogen entering our marine and freshwater environments, giving the state a valuable tool to tackle the HABs and other negative effects associated with synthetic fertilizer use.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter urges your support of A.10276/S.8170.

¹ https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/problem