

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By E. PAUL ECKHOLM, CGCS

## Phosphorous and You

On Friday, April 19th, the Governor signed into law S.F. 1555, a law regulating the use of fertilizers containing the plant nutrient phosphorous. At this point many of you are saying big deal and are preparing to read a different article. I would suggest that you read on.

The details of the law makes for some very dry reading but as always the devil is in the details. So, here is the skinny. If you live in the 7 county metro area you will no longer be allowed to apply any fertilizer containing phosphorous as of January 1, 2004. If you live outside that area your local unit of government may adopt the zero limit or if they don't you will be limited to fertilizer containing 3 percent phosphorous and only at rates recommended by the University of Minnesota.

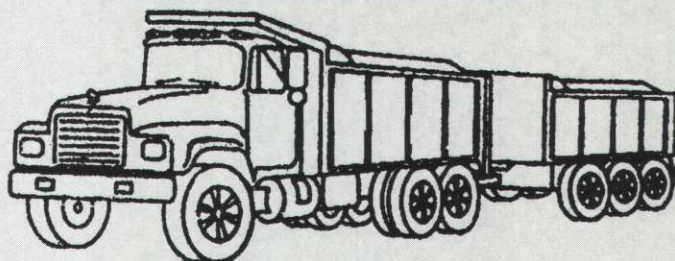
If you wish to apply a fertilizer containing phosphorous you may do so if you have a tissue, soil, or other test from a lab certified by the Commissioner which shows you need it, or if you are first establishing turf via seed or sod, or, and here is the good part, if it is used on a golf course under the direction of a person licensed, certified or approved by an organization with an ongoing

training program approved by the Commissioner.

As well no fertilizer may be released to any impervious surface. Any release must be contained and applied to a legal site.

What this means to all of us is that as of January 1, 2004 if we want to apply phosphorous containing fertilizer we must be trained and licensed. The real beauty is that we will be allowed to develop our own program and administer it ourselves. Don't get your hopes up that we will just issue licenses to everyone, the commissioner must approve of the program and we must keep records of the training for departmental review.

The Board will be evaluating this issue and determining a course of action. We will probably begin development of the program immediately so that we are ready come January 1, 2004. This has been the culmination of three years work by numerous people to be sure that we would be able to continue to apply necessary nutrients to our courses. I would like to take this chance to publicly thank the Minnesota Golf Association for their financial assistance in paying for the lobbyist who did much of the leg work on this issue.



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