

The Never Ending Battle

By PAUL ECKHOLM, CGCS
MGCSA Legislative Committee Chair

Rearing Its Ugly Head

Just when we thought that the issue of phosphorous use on golf courses was settled, the new legislative session convened. In January, Larry Vetter informed me that a member of the legislature wanted to speak with me concerning our "exemption" in the phosphorous law. I patiently awaited the call that never came. That is until only two days into the session. Rep. Denny McNamara (former president of the MNLA) called and informed me that he was a co-author of a bill that would take the phosphorous legislation state-wide and eliminate the "exemption" held by golf courses, a bill pushed by the Minnesota Lakes Association.

Swing Into Action

After speaking with Rep. McNamara

for about 30 minutes I was able to articulate our position that we are not "exempt" from the law but in fact we are voluntarily holding ourselves to a higher standard than the soil test option. Following this

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utive Director of the MNLA, and confirmed that they were not involved as well as to get inside information on Rep. McNamara and his possible reasoning.



E. Paul Eckholm, CGCS

Now, loaded for bear, I again called Mr. Carnival to relay all of this information to aid him in his discussions with the bill authors and the other powerful players at

call I immediately got on the phone with MGA Executive Director Tom Ryan to confirm that they would continue to allow us to use their lobbyist Doug Carnival. Next came the call directly to Mr. Carnival. I explained the situation, who was involved and the action I would like him to take. Together we came up with a plan of attack and moved forward. Remember, to this point no bill had been introduced. However, with all things at the Capitol, preemption is always the best route. The next call was to Greg Buzicky, Director of the Department of Agriculture. I informed him of the bill, which he had no knowledge of, and explained our position and asked if the Department had changed their stance regarding golf courses. He assured me their stand was the same and that he felt that we were in a stronger position now than in the past.

Following this call I spoke with Bob Fitch, exec-

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the Capitol. Then it was time to wait for the actual bill introduction and see what language was in it. This took place during the GCSAA Conference and Show. I visited the internet café and looked up the bill and thankfully noted that the language pertaining to golf courses was intact. This is no guarantee that it will remain, but it gives us better footing to start.

The Aftermath

As you can see, this is truly a team effort. With an established network of people, all of whom are kept up to date, we can significantly affect how we are seen and treated at the Capitol. We must all continue to do our part environmentally, since perception is a strong player in the halls of the legislature.

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