

Public Testimony of
Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association
President Mary Hartney
April 13, 2007

Good Morning, Mr. Chairman, Committee members.

I am Mary Hartney, president of the Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association which represents fertilizer and pesticide manufacturers, dealers and distributors operating in Florida.

My time is short. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you but have to admit that I wouldn't be here today if your ordinance had been simple. It would have been simpler if you had just adopted a resolution that advocated ordinances outlawing the consumer behavior you are actually seeking to influence.

You could have simply passed a resolution making it the law to keep all fertilizers off of sidewalks, driveways, roads and out of water bodies. It's simple, non-controversial, something everyone can understand, its enforceable and most importantly, will probably have a greater positive impact on water quality than anything else we'll talk about today.

The statewide rule effort we have spent months developing with the expertise of an extensive stakeholder group is based on scientific, agronomically-sound research. The other speakers today either have or will have addressed specific concerns with your resolution. We offer ourselves and our expertise as a resource. We would appreciate the opportunity to work with you if you are willing to consider changes to your ordinance. Thank you.

If I have more time, just a quick fertilizer primer courtesy of The Fertilizer Institute:

All plants need nutrients to grow. The major nutrients are nitrogen, phosphorus and potash – all naturally occurring elements in the environment – which are “fed” to plants to keep them healthy.

Nitrogen (N): Nitrogen is the primary building block for all organisms. It is essential to making proteins, helps keep plants green and is a critical component of soil structure. Nitrogen comes from the air.

Phosphorus (P): Phosphorus is found in every living cell. Phosphorus is a component of DNA and it also plays vital roles in capturing light during photosynthesis, helping with seed germination, and helping plants use water efficiently. Plants also use phosphorus to help fight external stress and prevent disease. Phosphorus comes from ancient sea life.

Potassium (K): Potassium is essential to the workings of every living cell. It plays an important role in plant's water utilization and also helps regulate the rate of photosynthesis. Other aspects of plant health influenced by potassium include the growth of strong stalks, protection from extreme temperatures, and the ability to fight stress and pests such as weeds and insects. Potassium comes from evaporated oceans.

Thank you.