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## City council passes bylaw restricting fertilizer use

Jul 13, 2011

### Bylaw aimed to reduce blue-green algae in lakes

By: Martha Dillman - Sudbury Northern Life

The City of Greater Sudbury is the first municipality in the province to pass a bylaw restricting the use of fertilizer with phosphorus.

The bylaw will come into effect April 2012.

Though phosphorus is a natural element, too much of it in lakes can lead to blue-green algae blooms, explained Stephen Monet, the city's co-ordinator of environmental initiatives. He did acknowledge that reducing the level of phosphorus in lakes would be beneficial.

The bylaw will not only restrict the use of fertilizer with phosphorus. It will also ban residents from using fertilizer on frozen ground, when it's raining or predicted to rain, within 15 metres of any water body and on "impervious surfaces" such as driveways and parking lots.

A few exemptions are included in the bylaw, and it will not affect residents wishing to establish a lawn from seed or sod, if they have a soil test that indicates their lawn needs phosphorus, in agricultural applications, or apply to sod farms and golf courses.

Monet explained the phosphorus in lakes can also be attributed to nearby unmaintained septic systems and lakeshore properties that are maintained right to the edge of the water. He said lakeside residents should have a buffer zone, about 15 metres in length, with natural vegetation.

During the July 13 meeting, city councillors unanimously supported the bylaw. Staff suggested three options: to pass a bylaw implementing the ban, to conduct an education program, or leave things status quo.

Ward 5 Coun. Ron Dupuis said he was glad the issue of septic systems was being discussed as well, as well as the fertilizer restriction.

Ward 2 Coun. Jacques Barbeau said passing the bylaw was "the right thing to do."

"We live in a city with 330 lakes," he said. "It's unfortunate we have to put bylaws in to ensure that people want to respect and understand the damages that they're doing by living on a lake."

Barbeau also said it was important for the city to review developments on lakes.

The idea of the bylaw was first brought forward to city council by the Greater Sudbury Watershed Alliance. Stephen Butcher, a member of the alliance, said he's "super pleased" the bylaw was passed.

"It was really nice to hear the councillors speak about the next steps, which is the septic field inspections," he said. "It was (also) really nice to hear the next step after that, which is controlling the development on lakes."

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**Corruption Killer**

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I laugh at some of these recommendations. No fertilizing on frozen ground or driveways and parking lots? Like fertilization happens in winter? People are trying to grow on driveways and parking lots too? They might as well throw in no fertilizing on roof tops too. Sorry for the jokes.

It would be more appropriate to stop all chemical fertilizers withing 200 meters of any waterway. Only organic fertilizers like bone meal, for example which breaks down more slowly. Even then no closer than 30 meters and not if there is a slope of greater of 25 degrees to the water's edge. Planting of a row of edges or more trees along the lakes would greatly help too.

The best idea may be to enact a bylaw forcing people on the nutrient enriched lakes to use the water that is already enriched with nutrients to water their lawns. Over time the lawns would use up the nutrients. It would also cut down on their water bills. Which would be good for all parties involved.

**Harry**

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Mike ... my apologies. I went overboard with my post. I am simply incensed that the ban is not ALL inclusive. Golfing and farming will use literally tons of this stuff.

**Mike from Sudbury**

7/13/2011 9:37:23 PM - [Report Abuse](#)



**Harry**  
why are you using phosphate fertilizer on your lawn?  
Do you have any idea what it does or what it will mean to your lawn if you stop using it?

**Harry**

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So the homeowner who use a few handfuls is banned, but golf courses and farms, which use tons of it are allowed. I'll simply drive out of town, buy some and use it as I want.

What is it with Sudbury and these idiotic bylaws?



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