
Environment Committee

HB 1314

Brief Description: Concerning municipally produced class A biosolids.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, O'Ban, Zeiger, Fey, Upthegrove and Jinkins.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adds a new definition of "turf fertilizer" as not including commercial fertilizers where the phosphorus content is derived solely from exceptional quality biosolids.

Hearing Date: 1/31/13

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Fertilizers.

Under state law, only commercial fertilizer that has been registered with the Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA) may be distributed. Registering with the WSDA includes the creation of a label for each product. Most packaged commercial fertilizers must have a conspicuous label, placed on or affixed to the package, stating in clear, legible form the product name, net weight, brand, and grade. Both the registration form submitted to the WSDA and label must identify if the products are waste-derived fertilizers, micronutrient fertilizers, or fertilizer materials containing phosphate. It is unlawful to distribute misbranded commercial fertilizer.

With some exceptions, the use and retail sale of turf fertilizers that contain phosphorus, as well as the application of turf fertilizer that contains phosphorus to turf, is prohibited. The prohibition does not apply if: the fertilizer is being used to establish or repair grass during a growing season; phosphorus is being added to soils with deficient plant-available phosphorus levels; or the application is to pasture lands, houseplants, flower or vegetable gardens, or agricultural or silvicultural lands.

Biosolids.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Biosolids are nutrient-rich organic materials resulting from the treatment of domestic sewage in a treatment facility. When treated and processed, these residuals can be recycled and applied as fertilizer to improve and maintain productive soils and stimulate plant growth.

Under federal law, there are different rules for different classes of biosolids. Class A biosolids contain no detectable levels of pathogens. When used in bulk, Class A biosolids are subject to buffer requirements, but not to crop harvesting restrictions. Class A biosolids are also referred to as exceptional quality biosolids.

Summary of Bill:

A new definition is added for "turf fertilizer," which excludes commercial fertilizers where the phosphorus content is derived solely from exceptional quality biosolids.

The amended definition of "turf fertilizer" takes effect on January 1, 2014.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.