

Self Guided Presentation

THE LAW:

Suffolk County Local Law 41-2007, A Local Law To Reduce Nitrogen Pollution by Reducing Use of Fertilizer in Suffolk County

Provided by the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning



Fertilizer Reduction Program

This is a self teaching guide to:

- **Definition of Terms**
- **Understanding the Fertilizer Law**
- **Requirements for Lawn Care Professionals**
- **Requirements for Businesses Selling Fertilizers**



Definition of Terms

- **Nitrogen Pollution** – When excess nitrogen enters surface waters and groundwater potentially causing serious environmental and health effects.
- **Runoff** - Precipitation or excess irrigation that cannot be immediately absorbed and runs off the land into surface waters. Runoff from roadways and properties carry pollutants into receiving waters such as streams, lakes, and bays and into storm sewer systems that empty into such waterbodies.
- **Leaching** – The movement of water-soluble particles (such as fertilizers and pesticides) unable to be immediately absorbed down through the soil, past the root zone, and into groundwater.

The Fertilizer Law took effect Jan 1, 2009

Suffolk County law states:

No fertilizer applications on lawns

~ between Nov 1st and April 1st ~

To view the law go to:

<https://apps2.suffolkcountyny.gov/legislature/resos/resos2007/i2117-07.htm>

For more information about the “Healthy Lawns, Clean Water” Fertilizer Reduction Program go to:

<https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Economic-Development-and-Planning/Planning-and-Environment/Water-Quality-Improvement/Healthy-Lawns-Clean-Water-Fertilizer-Reduction-Program>

Please direct questions about the program to:

Jennifer at 631-853-4412

Fertilizer Law

Why the Law?



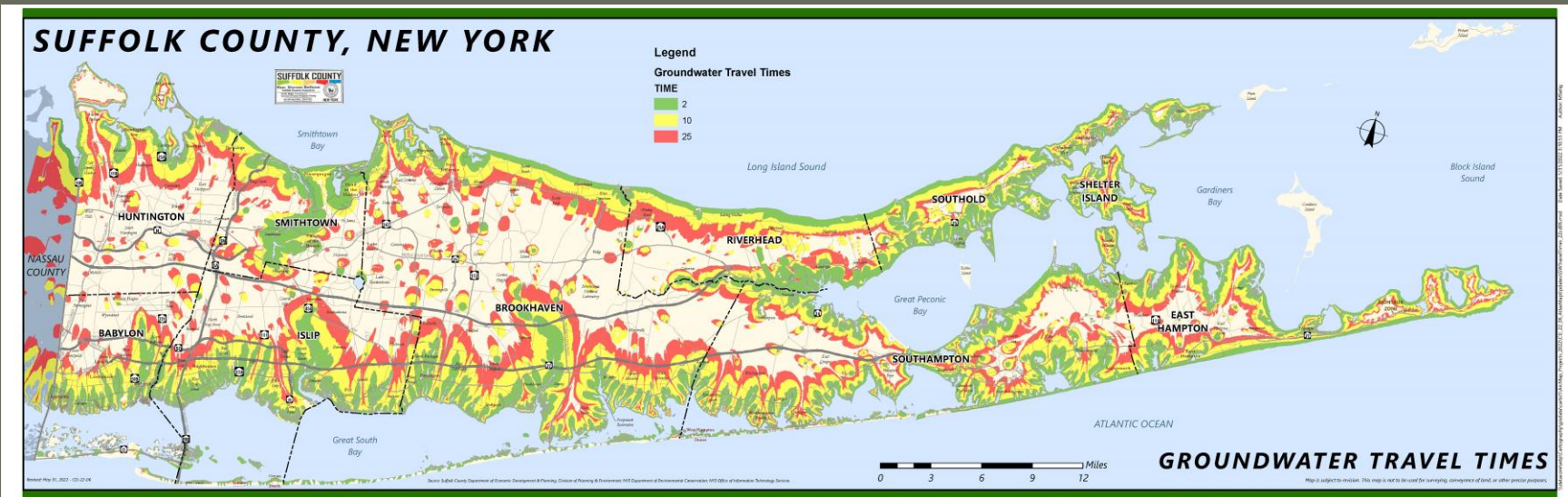
- ❑ To prevent and reduce nitrogen runoff, leaching, and groundwater pollution.
- ❑ Studies done over many years show that the interval between **November 1** and **April 1** has the greatest potential for runoff and nitrate leaching, since temperatures are generally too cold for the nitrogen to be absorbed by the grass plants (soil temp below 50°F). Most precipitation during this time period either runs off the soil surface or it enters the groundwater potentially transporting the unused nitrogen.

Fertilizer Law

What happens if nitrogen doesn't get used?

Pollution to Groundwater

- ❑ Nitrogen pollution occurs from fertilization when water containing nitrogen particles moves through the ground below root levels and into the groundwater (leaching).
- ❑ This poses a major problem, because the nitrates can leach all the way to Long Island's natural aquifer, the source of our drinking water.



Fertilizer Law

What happens if nitrogen doesn't get used?

Pollution to Surface Waters

Nitrogen pollution can affect surface waterbodies since it encourages the growth of algae. This disturbs plants, wildlife, and impacts our own activities (fishing, swimming, boating) in our bays, rivers, lakes, and streams, because the extra nitrogen changes the environment in the water.

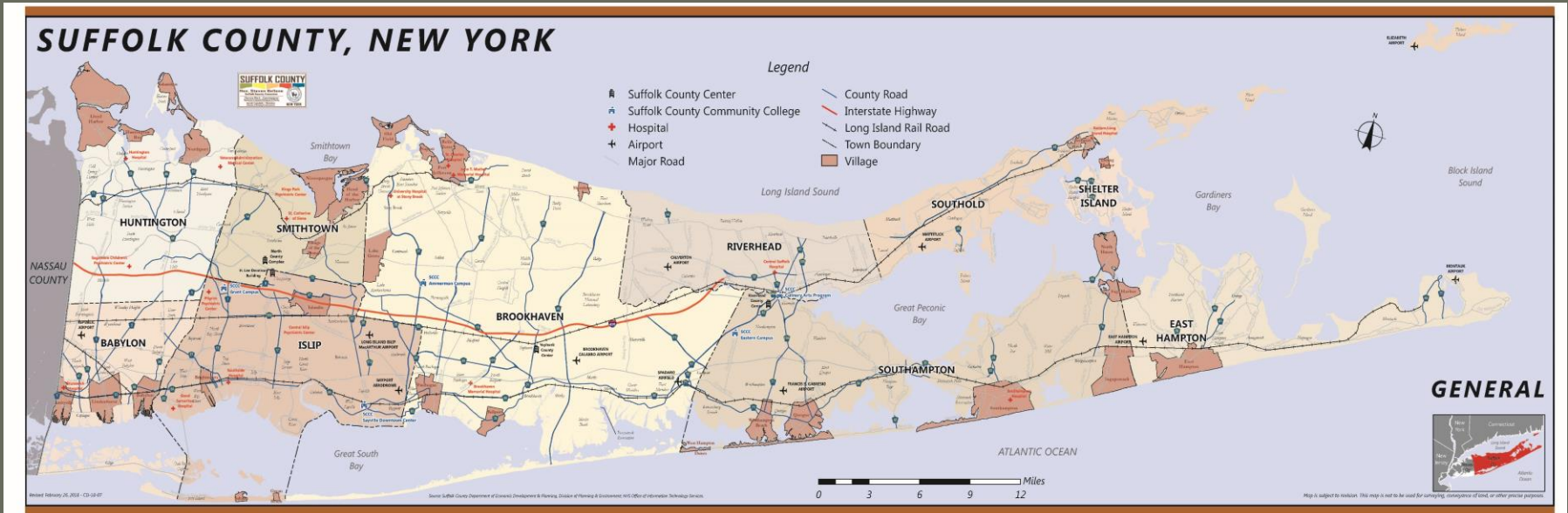


Brown Tide in Great South Bay, Robert Moses Bridge

Fertilizer Law

Who is affected by this law?

- All Suffolk County residents
- Lawn Care Professionals
- Golf courses
- County properties (with noted exemptions)
- Retail/Wholesale businesses selling lawn fertilizers



Fertilizer Law

What is the fine?

- ❑ Any violations of this law shall be subject to a civil penalty, in an amount not to exceed **\$1000 per violation**.
- ❑ Each day of continued violation shall constitute a separate additional violation.

Who is enforcing the law?

- ❑ **The *Suffolk County Department of Health Services*.
Pollution Control - Call: 631.854.2536**

Requirement for Lawn Care Professionals

Landscapers are also prohibited from applying fertilizer between Nov 1 and April 1.

- ❑ This law requires professional lawn care business owners in Suffolk County to attend a one-time educational fertilizer program.
- ❑ This program is designed to inform lawncare professionals about the law and the potential environmental impact of nitrogen pollution and to encourage the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in landscaping.
- ❑ Upon completion of the educational program, attendees receive a certificate directly from Suffolk County which is a requirement of a home improvement contractors license application or renewal.

Requirements for Businesses Selling Fertilizers

The law states the following:

- ❑ The Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning, Division of Water Quality Improvement, provides **informational signs and brochures** to all establishments that sell lawn fertilizers in Suffolk County. The signs must be displayed within 10 feet of the fertilizer display area.
- ❑ If an establishment has more than one fertilizer display area, and it is not continuous, then additional signs and brochures must be displayed within 10 feet of each display area.

Education and the law

How can establishments selling lawn fertilizer help to educate their employees and their costumers?

- ❑ Key information can be found on the signs and brochures that Suffolk County provides to retail and wholesale businesses.
- ❑ Detailed information can be found at the “Health Lawns, Clean Water” website:
<http://healthylawns.suffolkcountyny.gov>

Want to know more?

- Visit Suffolk County's websites:

<http://healthylawns.suffolkcountyny.gov>

<https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Economic-Development-and-Planning/Planning-and-Environment/Water-Quality-Improvement/-Healthy-Lawns-Clean-Water-Fertilizer-Reduction-Program>

- Visit Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County's
- website: <http://www.ccesuffolk.org> or call 631.727.7850