

## **Urge Lee County to Stay Strong on Fertilizer Control**

Lee County Commissioners are currently considering adopting an ordinance that would protect our waters by regulating the use of fertilizers. Unfortunately, lobbyists for the fertilizer industry are working to weaken this legislation. A public hearing is planned for November 13<sup>th</sup>.

Fertilizer is a proven source of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), that when added to water, increase algal growth and impact our water quality. The relationship between nutrient concentrations and algal growth is well documented in scientific literature. This algae has blanketed our beaches for the greater part of two years and is devastating to Lee County's tourist-related economy.

Lobbyists use phrases like, "Best Management Practices, or BMPs are good enough." Unfortunately, the problem with BMPs is that they are unenforceable and not always kept current. To be successful, it is critical that Lee County adopt a Fertilizer Control Ordinance that protects our waters and is enforceable.

Earlier this year, our local Regional Planning Council unanimously adopted a Fertilizer Resolution using sound scientific input. This Resolution provides a model for communities to develop effective Ordinances. This is the model that Lee County should adopt.

To successfully protect our water, the Ordinance should be as strong as possible and include:

- Limit nitrogen and phosphorus content of residential fertilizers
- Encourage/require fertilizers containing slow release nitrogen
- Prohibit fertilizer use in fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorus during the rainy season when it is most likely to be swept into area waters (July, August, September)
- Establish fertilizer-free buffer zones adjacent to bodies of water, making these buffers 15 to 25 or more.
- Provide public education

Between now and November 13<sup>th</sup> is a critical time for each of us who cares about our water quality to contact the five Lee County Commissioners at [dist1@leegov.com](mailto:dist1@leegov.com), [dist2@leegov.com](mailto:dist2@leegov.com), [dist3@leegov.com](mailto:dist3@leegov.com), [dist4@leegov.com](mailto:dist4@leegov.com), and [dist5@leegov.com](mailto:dist5@leegov.com) or call them at (239) 533-2259. The public hearing is currently scheduled for 5:00 p.m. December 4<sup>th</sup> in the Lee County Commission Chambers, 2120 Main Street, Fort Myers.

Our water quality is our livelihood, our economy, and our environment. Please urge Commissioners to take strong measures by adopting the strongest Fertilizer Control Ordinance possible and not give in to fertilizer lobbyists.