

# Fertilizer Recommendations *for the Tampa Bay Region*



In November 2008, the Tampa Bay Estuary Program's Policy Board approved a model ordinance regulating non-agricultural use of fertilizer in the Tampa Bay region. The ordinance was the result of a series of stakeholder workshops coordinated by TBEP that involved some 42 agencies, organizations, and special interest groups.

Local governments are encouraged, but not required to adopt the ordinance, which:

**Bans application** of Nitrogen and Phosphorous on lawn and landscape plants from June 1-September 30, the summer rainy season.

**Prohibits application** of Nitrogen or Phosphorous fertilizer within 10 feet of a water body.

**Restricts the retail sale** of lawn fertilizers containing Nitrogen and Phosphorous during the summer.

**Establishes a licensing and certification program** for lawn care professionals

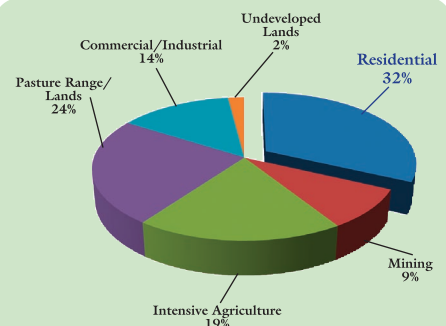
**Encourages waterfront property owners** to plant ground covers, shrubs or other plants instead of turf grass in a 6-foot-wide "no mow" zone along the water's edge.

**Urges local governments** to provide information about the nitrogen content of reclaimed water to customers using reclaimed for lawn irrigation.

Nitrogen is the primary pollutant in Tampa Bay. Residential runoff, including fertilizer residues, accounts for about 32% of the nitrogen carried in stormwater to the bay.

TBEP research indicates that moderate compliance (50%) with a fertilizer ordinance could reduce Nitrogen loadings to Tampa Bay by 84 tons a year, and save millions in costly stormwater treatment projects.

The model ordinance, and supporting documents, can be viewed at <http://www.tbep.tech.org/Fertilizer/FertilizerHomePage.html>.



Urban runoff, including lawn fertilizers, comprises about 32% of the nitrogen carried in stormwater to the bay. Too much nitrogen causes algae growth that clouds the water and prevents sunlight from reaching seagrasses.

