



November 3, 2015

Maine Board of Pesticides Control  
Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry  
28 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Members of the Maine Board of Pesticides Control:

For nearly 20 years, Friends of Casco Bay has partnered with the Maine Board of Pesticides Control. Together, we established BayScaping, an educational outreach program that has expanded statewide into Yardscaping. MPBC supported our research to document the presence or absence of pesticides flowing into Casco Bay in stormwater runoff. We have collaborated on numerous efforts to reach out to residents and applicators alike to encourage reducing or eliminating the use of lawn chemicals. Throughout our work together, we have been mindful of the Board's adherence to its statutory responsibility **to minimize reliance on pesticides**.

We encourage the Board to recommit to its mandate to reduce dependence on pesticides, as well as to related weed and feed products, by:

- **Collaborating with municipalities**

As more municipalities consider restricting or banning the use of lawn chemicals, your science-based, balanced advice on pesticide management is critical to these public deliberations.

- **Training pesticides applicators in integrated pest management and in chemical-free lawn care**

Lawn care professionals need more training to respond knowledgeably to the increasing demand for chem-free lawns. We are seeing growing support for this approach from the yard-care industry, including landscaping professionals in the Maine Landscape & Nursery Association and the Maine Arborists Association.

- **Sampling for the presence of pesticides in coastal sediments**

More data is needed to understand the potential impact of lawn chemicals on our coastal economy. Pesticides and fertilizers have been implicated in threats to our most important fisheries, including lobsters, mussels, and clams.

- **Tracking and reporting the sales of pesticides in Maine, especially home use**

These statistics tell the story better than any words can that Maine residents use more pesticides on their lawns for cosmetic purposes than all of farming and forestry combined. The last year these figures were reported was 2011.

- **Increasing your emphasis on consumer education**

As professional landscapers often complain, a lack of understanding by homeowners contributes to unrealistic expectations that "a perfect lawn" can be achieved without environmental and health consequences.

There are many compelling reasons to reduce our use of pesticides and lawn fertilizers. Pesticides threaten the health of children, pets, and wildlife, when they are applied to the landscape. These chemicals harm aquatic life when washed into the Bay by stormwater. **Friends of Casco Bay has detected a variety of pesticides in locations all around the Bay**, as seen in the chart below.

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We are concerned about the **impacts to the Bay from the nitrogen in fertilizers**. Friends of Casco Bay has been sampling nitrogen in Casco Bay for years. Our data clearly show **nitrogen levels are higher closer to shore**, indicating that land-based sources are contributing the excess nitrogen to our waters—the result of human activities.

When it rains, nitrogen-laden fertilizers can be swept into Maine’s nearshore waters. This nitrogen pollution triggers algae blooms that release carbon dioxide when they die and decay. In seawater, carbon dioxide forms an acid. Acidification changes the chemistry of the water, inhibits shell growth in clams, mussels, oysters, and other marine organisms, and is suspected as a cause of reproductive disorders in some fish.

While fertilizers are not the only source of excess nitrogen, limiting or eliminating the use of fertilizers locally will lower the amount of nitrogen coming in to Casco Bay; this can help slow the devastating effects acidification and eutrophication are having on our marine resources.

Thank you for your time and service to the State of Maine.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy L. Ramsdell  
Executive Director &  
Casco Baykeeper *Pro Tem*,  
Friends of Casco Bay

### Friends of Casco Bay Stormwater Monitoring Program Positive Detects for Pesticides - 2001 through 2009

