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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Watershed Association Applauds Enactment of Fertilizer Control Law** *Governor Christie Signs Important Measure Into Law*

January 7, 1011 (Hopewell, NJ) – After years of hard work, the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association is pleased to applaud the enactment of the Fertilizer Control Law on Wednesday, January 5, 2011. The new law will help restore local waterways that are polluted with phosphorus and in many instances violate state water quality standards.

“Phosphorus is a major pollutant in freshwater streams across New Jersey and in our watershed. This new law will help reverse decades of pollution and bring cleaner streams to all of New Jersey,” said Jim Waltman, Executive Director.

Phosphorus from lawn fertilizers drains into local streams when it is carried by rainwater or snowmelt. Too much phosphorus leads to excessive algae growth that suffocates fish and other aquatic animals.

According to the Watershed Association’s “State of the Watershed Report,” 29 of the 31 StreamWatch water quality sites the association tests for phosphorus violate state water quality standards. In addition, 23 of the 26 municipalities within the watershed fail to meet state standards for aquatic life. (Read the report online: <http://www.thewatershed.org/resource-center/reports-and-materials/>)

For more than three years, the Watershed Association advocated for the development and adoption of the Fertilizer Control Law.

“The Fertilizer Control Law is big news for New Jersey and the nation,” said Jennifer Coffey, Watershed Association Policy Director. “It is the strongest fertilizer law in the country and several states are watching what we are doing here in New Jersey to help them guide their own efforts to reduce nutrient pollution. How we manage our land has a direct impact on water quality. This law will result in smarter lawn care that protects and restores our streams.”

The Fertilizer Control Bill will:

- Eliminate phosphorus in lawn fertilizer used and sold in New Jersey, helping curb excess phosphorus from running off soils already laden with the nutrient.
- Require at least 20 percent slow release nitrogen in all lawn fertilizers. Slow-release nitrogen fertilizes lawns for a longer period of time and helps keep nitrogen out of waterways.
- Require lawn care professionals to attend training about appropriate fertilizer application and content.

- Prohibit application of lawn fertilizer when it is raining or when rain is predicted, between November 15 and March 15 for individuals caring for their own laws and December 1 and March 15 each year for professional lawn care providers - when the ground is typically frozen and lawns cannot absorb any of the nutrients.

Certain portions of the Fertilizer Control Law will take two years to implement. To start making a difference today, the Watershed Association recommends waiting until at least March 15 to apply fertilizer, choosing to use phosphorus-free fertilizers that contain slow-release nitrogen, carefully following the application rates formula on the back of the bag, and avoiding fertilizing before it rains. To learn more ways to help, the Watershed Association offers a River-Friendly Resident Checklist at <http://www.thewatershed.org/conservation/river-friendly/>.

*Interviews with Executive Director Jim Waltman and Policy Director Jennifer Coffey are available upon request. Contact Communications Director Gwen McNamara at (609) 737-3735 x16 or [gmcnamara@thewatershed.org](mailto:gmcnamara@thewatershed.org) to arrange an interview.*

**About the Watershed Association**

*The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association is central New Jersey's first environmental group, protecting clean water and the environment through conservation, advocacy, science and education. Since 1949, the Watershed Association has served a 265-square-mile region drained by the Stony Brook and Millstone River and spanning 26 towns and five counties. To learn more, visit [thewatershed.org](http://thewatershed.org).*