

House Bill Analysis

HJM 4021

HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND ECOLOGY COMMITTEE

February 2, 2000

<p>- Requests Congress to enact certain legislation regarding commercial fertilizers.</p>

BACKGROUND:

In 1999, state legislation was enacted that adopted the Canadian standards for the non-nutrient content of commercial fertilizers and authorized the state's Department of Agriculture to revise these standards if federal standards are adopted or if peer-reviewed scientific studies found that the standards are not appropriate for protecting human health or the environment. The legislation also regulated micro-nutrient fertilizers and the use of waste materials in the production of commercial fertilizers, established means for those who use commercial fertilizers to obtain information regarding the components of the fertilizers, and directed that certain additional technical studies be conducted regarding such materials. (Chapter 36, Laws of 1998.)

In April 1999, the Departments of Ecology, Agriculture, and Health issued their *Final Report: Screening Survey for Metals and Dioxins in Fertilizer Products and Soils in Washington State* and in November 1999 issued an addendum to the report entitled *Dioxins in Washington State Agricultural Soils*.— Attached are copies of the executive summary of the report, the abstract for the addendum, and a *Focus* article by the Department of Ecology regarding the dioxins study.

In 1999, legislation was enacted altering provisions of the 1998 legislation. Certain labeling requirements were modified as were requirements on how information on the content of fertilizers is to be provided. In addition, the legislation no longer permitted component registration of fertilizers, and waived metals information requirements for certain ammonia products. (Chapters 381 and 382, Laws of 1999.)

SUMMARY:

Congress is requested to enact legislation that:

- requires packaged commercial fertilizer to be labeled to show the nutritive, micro-nutritive, and non-nutritive content of the fertilizer, including any heavy metals;
- requires such information regarding the content of the fertilizer to be available to purchasers of bulk fertilizer; and
- expressly authorizes each state to establish standards for these contents in the fertilizers sold within its boundaries.

