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Public Hearing

Re:

Suffolk County Legislature  
Homestead-A-Syst Task Force

11:00 A.M.  
March 22, 2007

Held at:

Suffolk County Legislature  
300 Center Drive  
Riverhead, New York

Public Hearing - Homestead-A-Syst  
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- 1 Homestead-A-Syst Task Force Membership:
- 2
- 3 Legislator Viloría-Fisher, EPA Committee Chair
- 4
- 5 Neal Lewis, Presiding Officer
- 6
- 7 Amy Juchatz, Department of Energy Commissioner
- 8
- 9 Tamson Yeh, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- 10
- 11 H. Pat Voges, N-S Landscape Gardeners Co. Exec.
- 12
- 13 Lorraine Ditko, Presiding Officer
- 14
- 15 Padraic South, Suffolk County Water Authority
- 16
- 17 Charles Scheer,
- 18 Long Island Farm Bureau
- 19 Long Island Pest Control Association
- 20
- 21 James Sottio, LI Arboricultural Association
- 22
- 23 Salvatore C. Scarpitta Ph.D., DHS-Peconic Estuary
- 24
- 25 Eileen Anders, Master Gardener Program

Public Hearing - Homestead-A-Syst  
3

1 Speakers:

2

3 George Starkie

4

5 David McMaster

6

7 John Iurka,

8 Professional Certified Applicators of LI

9

10 Peter Behersky, Certified Applicator

11

12 Larry Wilson,

13 NY Alliance for Environmental Concerns

14

15 Deborah Green, LI Arboricultural Association

16

17 Stuart Lefstein - September's Land, Inc.

18

19 Bruce Karas

20

21 Frank Beyrodt, Jr.

22

23 Francis Lofaro, Country Club Lawns

24

25 Michael D'Andrea

1 THE CHAIRPERSON: My knowledge is that  
2 this public meeting has been published in the duly  
3 selected papers in the county and that it has been  
4 published in a variety of newsletters.

5 Is there anyone here who wishes to  
6 speak who has not given the clerk his or her name?

7 Thank you so much for being here this  
8 morning. This is a wonderful turnout.

9 What we need is your name and your  
10 telephone number. The clerk should have been out  
11 here with cards, but we don't usually have our  
12 public hearings in Riverhead, and two nights ago  
13 we had a very long general session here and I  
14 think they're just catching up.

15 So the first person we have is George  
16 Starkie.

17 And may I let everyone know that you do  
18 have five minutes to speak. I will let you know  
19 when your time is up.

20 If anyone on the panel has a question,  
21 they can ask you a question. We do want everyone  
22 on the panel to know, as members of the committee,  
23 that this is a public hearing, so this is a time  
24 for the public to let their feelings be heard or  
25 their opinions to be heard. We may only ask

1 questions. We are not to enter into any kind of  
2 debate with anybody from the public.

3 Thank you again.

4 Mr. Starkie, your time begins now.

5 MR. STARKIE: Okay. My name is George  
6 Starkie. I wear many hats. I gave a number of  
7 cards. I'm also an elected official, a trustee in  
8 the Village of Farmingdale. So, to let you know,  
9 I sit on both sides.

10 I wanted to come down today because I'm  
11 also a farmer in Cutchogue. I farm eighty-six  
12 acres out there, nursery stock. I also own a  
13 garden store in Farmingdale, just on the other  
14 side of the Nassau County border, but a lot of my  
15 customers come in from Suffolk.

16 What I wanted to do is I know this is  
17 more of a fact-finding type of a meeting. And,  
18 unfortunately, I didn't hear about the first one.  
19 I just found out about this meeting. So I'm glad  
20 I have an opportunity to get some of this  
21 information on the record.

22 I have a bunch of bullet points, and I  
23 didn't know I had five minutes, so I'm going to  
24 try and breeze through.

25 One of the things I wanted to point out

1 is that there seems to be a lot of misinformation.  
2 And one thing that comes to mind is the Newsday,  
3 front-page Newsday article about the septic  
4 systems and the cesspool situation and what that's  
5 doing with nitrates in our environment out here.  
6 And although most politicians are being honest,  
7 they don't want to deal with that. It's very  
8 difficult to tell someone you have to spend  
9 \$10,000 to upgrade from a cesspool to a septic  
10 system. Although, the consensus is it seems, in  
11 the article, that this is the problem.

12 I also wanted to point out that I  
13 noticed when I walked in that the turf right in  
14 front of the building, that's untreated turf. And  
15 that should be an option. I don't think that  
16 should be a mandate. So, whatever, we'll get to  
17 the facts and figures, but that's untreated turf  
18 out there.

19 The other thing I wanted to leave for  
20 you so that you can have it is there was a law  
21 that was just adopted in Farmingdale that was  
22 another mandate from New York that came down from  
23 the federal government, and it's the Local Law to  
24 Prohibit Illicit Discharged Activities and  
25 Connections to Separate Storm Sewer Systems. I'm

1 sure you had to adopt it. It's quite lengthy.  
2 I wanted to point out that it addresses a lot of  
3 the issues that you folks are addressing right  
4 now. There's legislation out there now.

5 I know in our small village we're in the  
6 process now, through education, to let you know  
7 that what goes into the storm water drains ends up  
8 in our bays.

9 We're getting innovative. A lot of  
10 people in our Village walk. A lot of the manholes  
11 are being changed. So when mom goes to the bus,  
12 if you're ever thinking of going out there with  
13 any type of paint, paintbrush, your dog waste,  
14 there's a dozen of them -- And I think there is a  
15 grant available to pay for them, which is kind of  
16 cool, because that's what we're all worried about,  
17 how do we pay for all this.

18 I'll leave this here. And it really has  
19 some phenomenal information. And it's a mandate,  
20 typical, but yet it hasn't even been broached, I  
21 don't think. I don't know if you're even aware of  
22 this legislation.

23 THE CHAIRPERSON: Trustee Starkie, if  
24 you could give a copy of that to the stenographer,  
25 that way we can have it on the record.

1 Thank you very much.

2 MR. STARKIE: One of the things that I  
3 wanted to point out also is that this came up in  
4 previous legislation that I know Mr. Schneiderman  
5 had tried to have passed back when.

6 One of the things that concerns me is  
7 that you can't grow turf with a pound of nitrogen.  
8 I saw that in some of the draft possible  
9 legislation.

10 Suffolk County was in the forefront of  
11 trying to run a golf course organically. It has  
12 been not a complete failure. I mean we've learned  
13 a lot of lessons. We learned how to kill grass.  
14 And it's unfortunate, but to this date, with the  
15 best people in the industry, the superintendents  
16 who have the degrees who really know the game,  
17 they can't do it, and now we're asking our  
18 homeowners to do it.

19 The other thing I wanted to point out is  
20 Marty Petronick -- I said I was going to mention  
21 his name. I'm sure Tamson will cover me on this  
22 one. But Marty's done extensive research in  
23 nitrification in turf. He found out that when you  
24 have a poor standard of grass you have more of an  
25 issue of nitrogen leaching into your groundwater

1 than when you have a good healthy lawn. There's  
2 been extensive studies done.

3 I was very active in the Peconic Estuary  
4 where we looked at farming, and I actually  
5 volunteered my farm. Scott Clark came out and we  
6 did studies on nitrogen and leaching. And when we  
7 were spoonfeeding -- we usually put it out of a  
8 helicopter -- it cut my nitrogen use in half. I  
9 just learned this two years ago, and I've been in  
10 the industry thirty-five years. So you're never  
11 too old to learn.

12 I'm very happy that Suffolk -- Again,  
13 I'm into health and welfare. I sit on both sides.  
14 But I think I might ask for another five minutes  
15 when I get out to your other meeting, because I  
16 have some other bullet points. And I might write  
17 a letter. If it goes into the record, I'll submit  
18 a letter.

19 THE CHAIRPERSON: If I may ask you,  
20 with the indulgence of the rest of the Task Force,  
21 perhaps at one of our meetings you could just come  
22 as a public official and speak to us, join us at  
23 one of our meetings.

24 MR. STARKIE: I'll make myself  
25 available. It will be my pleasure.

1 THE CHAIRPERSON: You have a lot of  
2 expertise and experience on both sides of the  
3 aisle.

4 MR. STARKIE: And being a retailer, I'm  
5 in retail. And I understand that there's a lot of  
6 concern about four applications of fertilizer, but  
7 all the studies have said to have good healthy  
8 turf that's the recommended amount, a thousand  
9 four times a year. We can go back and forth.

10 And my other concern is you have your  
11 haves and have nots. You see a lot of the  
12 industry represented here, because it used to be  
13 do it yourself, everything was do it yourself,  
14 but today it's do it for me. I know we're all  
15 guilty of that, we just don't have the time in our  
16 lives. So a lot of this material is being applied  
17 by professionals now. I don't think the homeowner  
18 market is what it used to be.

19 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

20 Before you leave the mic, is there  
21 anyone who has a question?

22 Thank you, again. Thanks for taking  
23 the time.

24 Our next speaker is David McMaster. And  
25 you come from practically around the corner, Mr.

1 McMaster.

2 MR. MCMASTER: Yes, I do. And thank you  
3 for allowing me to speak in front of the Task  
4 Force today.

5 I represent Greenpoint of New York. I'm  
6 also a practicing arborist in New York State for  
7 about thirty years. And I'd like to talk,  
8 obviously, about the nitrogen proposal that the  
9 Task Force has initiated.

10 First of all, I'd like to commend the  
11 Task Force on trying to regulate the load that we  
12 are putting onto the aquifer.

13 As environmentalists, which I truly  
14 believe that people who practice arboriculture are  
15 truly environmentalists, we're students of the  
16 environment. We're caring for nature's really  
17 largest living organism, which is trees, and they  
18 are very essential to oxygen and just life in  
19 general. And there was a recent study that if we  
20 started today and planted something like fifty  
21 million trees that we could basically stop global  
22 warming. So trees have a major significance on  
23 what happens in the environment.

24 What I'd like to address is the one  
25 pound of nitrogen per thousand square foot

1 recommendation that you've put forth. I think  
2 that this is kind of an arbitrary number that was  
3 put together and is not really a recommendation  
4 that has been established through the  
5 arboricultural standards that are accepted  
6 nationwide.

7           And I would like to present to you  
8 something called the Best Management Practices for  
9 Tree and Shrub Fertilization. This is a  
10 publication that's accepted by the TCIA, which is  
11 Tree Care Industry of America, and the ISA, the  
12 International Society of Arboriculture. And these  
13 are the standards which we use to apply soil  
14 amendments to the ground.

15           Basically, there are three objectives we  
16 have when we're talking about fertilizing trees.  
17 We look at maintaining trees, maintenance level.  
18 We look at a different quantity of nitrogen for  
19 trying to get trees established. And the third is  
20 we look for different quantities of nitrogen when  
21 a tree is in a stressful situation. And a  
22 stressful situation could be from a defoliation,  
23 from an insect such as gypsy moth or tent  
24 caterpillar or any other type of defoliant, or it  
25 could be from construction damage. All three of

1 those different areas require different amounts of  
2 nitrogen.

3 Now, the best way to determine the level  
4 of nitrogen that you're going to be putting down  
5 is to take a soil sample. And nowhere in your  
6 recommendations do I see anything mentioned on  
7 soil sampling. Soil sampling is the way that we  
8 should be moving forward and really is the only  
9 acceptable practice for not only arboriculture but  
10 also lawn care should be based.

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: I hate to interrupt  
12 you. And you can see that I'm smiling, and that's  
13 because I received a fax from Pat Voges a few days  
14 ago showing me what a soil sample looks for. And  
15 as a member of this Task Force, both he and  
16 Cornell Cooperative have been saying that we have  
17 to have soil sampling as a part of our educational  
18 process. And so we're on it.

19 MR. MCMASTER: That's the most critical  
20 part. And then identifying the three objectives  
21 that I spoke of. And those three objectives are  
22 going to require different levels of nitrogen.

23 For maintenance, a pound of nitrogen per  
24 thousand square foot is fine. But if you're  
25 trying to establish a plan, a pound of nitrogen

1 may not be enough. If you're trying to overcome  
2 construction damage in a plant, a pound of  
3 nitrogen may not be enough.

4 So I think that you not only have to  
5 look at the nitrogen load that we're putting on  
6 our soils on Long Island, but you have to look at  
7 all of the load that we're putting on the  
8 aquifers on Long Island, including phosphorus,  
9 including trace elements. And that's where soil  
10 sampling will really come into play and really  
11 limit the amount of excess material that we're  
12 putting into the soil.

13 Not only would I like to submit this on  
14 record, but I also have a letter from one of our  
15 larger Greenpoint members, Lesco, who is a large  
16 distributor on Long Island and is almost  
17 nationwide. They made a letter of comment on  
18 this. And I'd like to submit that for the Task  
19 Force to consider as well.

20 So I'll leave you with both of those.

21 And I'd like to close by saying I  
22 appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak in  
23 front of the Task Force. And I think a lot more  
24 work needs to be done before this can be  
25 finalized.

1 Does anyone have any questions on  
2 anything that I've said?

3 THE CHAIRPERSON: I'd like to thank you  
4 for taking the time to come in. And --

5 MS. JUCHATZ: I think I just want to  
6 clarify. I do have a question for you, but then  
7 also just to clarify a little bit.

8 The Task Force here is developing an  
9 educational program for the Homestead-A-Syst  
10 program for homeowners. And one of the things  
11 that we're looking at very closely is fertilizer  
12 use. The reference to one pound per thousand  
13 square foot fertilizer for nitrogen fertilizer use  
14 has been something that our Task Force is looking  
15 at. But I think it's a little bit misrepresented.

16 I don't want you to have the impression  
17 that that's something that the Task Force has  
18 endorsed and accepted. It's something that has  
19 been brought to the attention of our Task Force by  
20 the Count Executive's Office through the  
21 Commission of the Department of Environment and  
22 Energy as something that they're looking at and  
23 something that they're considering proposing.

24 So this input that you're giving us,  
25 still give us that input, we want it, but I feel a

1 little bit that it's being misrepresented, that  
2 it's a proposal by this group. And so I just want  
3 to make sure that it's represented that it's a  
4 proposal that has been brought to us.

5 We want your input still on that. But I  
6 just don't want you to have the impression that  
7 it's something that this Task Force has proposed.  
8 It is something that we're considering.

9 I think the origin, the reason that the  
10 County Exec's office is looking at that is that it  
11 was something that was proposed and actually  
12 published in a shed guide through the Peconic  
13 Estuary program. So it's something that they had  
14 worked on. And my understanding is that it was a  
15 committee that was formed by a bunch of different  
16 individuals, including, I believe, the U.S. EPA as  
17 well as other people who are part of the Peconic  
18 Estuary program. It's not something that was  
19 pulled out of thin air. I wasn't involved in  
20 this, but it's something that, you know, we are  
21 looking at.

22 We are going to provide feedback. So  
23 your input is extremely valuable and important.  
24 But I just don't want it misrepresented that it's  
25 something that originated with this Task Force.

1 MR. MCMASTER: That's good to know.

2 THE CHAIRPERSON: Our thrust is  
3 basically educational.

4 MR. MCMASTER: One of the things I  
5 wanted to comment on, which is not really my area  
6 of expertise, but I did read on the back of the  
7 draft legislation from the County Exec's office an  
8 asterisk bullet that said:

9 "We suspect that most Scott's  
10 fertilizers already comply with the slow release  
11 requirement" -- which the slow release requirement  
12 is certainly something we advocate as well -- "and  
13 that each bag is already limited to one pound of  
14 nitrogen per thousand square foot application.  
15 However, the Scott's four-step program can result  
16 in four applications, four pounds over a one-year  
17 period." And then the suggestion was made that  
18 you can put stickers on the bag that would say  
19 either use half of this rate or apply this now and  
20 don't apply it later.

21 And I caution you on that, because  
22 that's a slippery slope. Because when you have  
23 blended materials that are intended for the  
24 application for preemergent crabgrass control, for  
25 instance, the preemergent is formulated to be put

1 down at a certain rate.

2 When you go off the labeled rate, first  
3 of all, you're breaking New York State law by  
4 applying less than the labeled rate. And as  
5 bizarre as that seems, New York will not allow us  
6 to apply less material than a label calls for  
7 unless we approach them and get a special use  
8 label for that particular purpose.

9 So I don't know if that's been raised  
10 with you folks or not, but that should be given  
11 serious consideration, that your proposal here may  
12 actually be breaking some laws that are already on  
13 the books.

14 THE CHAIRPERSON: And, again, you  
15 realize that proposal is a County Executive  
16 proposal that they brought to us to look at.  
17 That's a County Executive proposal. But I believe  
18 that the --

19 MEMBER JUCHATZ: That's a very good  
20 point. And so I think that can be part of our  
21 feedback to them. Because that's really why they  
22 came to us, to sort of get our feedback. So I'll  
23 bring that to their attention.

24 I did have a question, because you  
25 brought up the issue of soil sampling, which has

1       been something that we have discussed.

2               When you say soil sample, what do you  
3       consider to be a soil sample? When you say soil  
4       sample, what would you like to have analyzed in a  
5       soil sample?

6               MR. MCMASTER: First of all, let me tell  
7       you who I represent as a company. I work for  
8       Bartlett Tree Experts. And we do soil sampling  
9       traditionally on, well, this year we have made a  
10      recommendation and an executive decision that all  
11      of the fertilization, new fertilization that we  
12      set for the 2007 year will only be done in  
13      conjunction with a soil sample, and the material  
14      that's put into the ground will only be applied as  
15      it relates to the result of that soil sample.

16              We do over twenty-five million dollars  
17      worth of fertilization across the country. And  
18      our objective for the 2008 season is to have every  
19      single client have a soil analysis done and only  
20      nutrients applied that are deficient for those  
21      three levels of objectives that I was talking  
22      about earlier, which are maintenance,  
23      establishment, or overcoming damage by stress,  
24      whatever that stress may be.

25              We can look at a variety of different

1 things. We typically look at NPK, which are your  
2 main nutrients, nitrogen, phosphorous and  
3 potassium.

4 We look for the pH level, because if  
5 it's too low or too high that can tie up the  
6 plant's ability to absorb those nutrients. And  
7 then also trace elements we look at, pretty broad  
8 spectrum of trace elements. But also one of the  
9 issues is that if you have a low level of a trace  
10 element that could tie up the nitrogen in the soil  
11 and not make it readily available to the plant.

12 MEMBER JUCHATZ: Would you provide us a  
13 copy of what you would analyze the soil for?

14 MR. MCMASTER: Without a doubt.

15 We do not do this in-house. We actually  
16 do it with a national laboratory. There's a lot  
17 of national laboratories that do this. A&L is  
18 probably the largest, but I know there are a  
19 couple of private firms on Long Island that do it.

20 It's relatively inexpensive to have  
21 done, and I advocate it being done.

22 THE CHAIRPERSON: Is there another  
23 question? Pat, did you have a question?

24 MEMBER VOGES: More of a statement.

25 I really just want to comment on what

1 Member Amy said. You guys are here at the early  
2 hour, not the final hour. Once we have a chance  
3 to get our input, and what you're doing here is  
4 bringing us information to bring back to the Task  
5 Force and the County Executive. So this is an  
6 information hearing and what we want to hear is  
7 your input.

8 MR. MCMASTER: I hope that's what I  
9 provided to you today.

10 MEMBER VOGES: Exactly.

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

12 I saw some people come in while Mr.  
13 McMaster was speaking. If you wish to speak --  
14 Can you hear me? I'll speak loudly, I'm  
15 a former teacher.

16 I saw some gentlemen come in while Mr.  
17 McMaster was speaking. If you wish to speak,  
18 there is a piece of paper at the front desk.  
19 Please write your name, and the stenographer will  
20 give me that sheet or my aide will.

21 Mrs. Sure, my aide will be bringing  
22 cards to the audience. If you haven't filled  
23 something in and you wish to speak, please fill  
24 out that green card so that we can call you up to  
25 speak.

1           So please bear with us. I don't know if  
2 your mic is working or not. I'll let the clerk  
3 know that.

4           Our next speaker is John Iurka. And you  
5 represent the Professional Certified Applicators?

6           MR. IURKA: Thank you very much for the  
7 opportunity to speak to this committee. And I  
8 appreciate all of the efforts that you're making  
9 in developing better education for the population  
10 of Suffolk County, the issues that you are working  
11 on.

12           I have some paperwork that I'll be  
13 submitting in the form of a letter and some  
14 supporting documentation.

15           I'm the legislative liaison with  
16 Professional Certified Applicators of Long Island.  
17 We're an industry organization that represents  
18 almost two hundred companies in Nassau and Suffolk  
19 County of people that are involved in both  
20 structural pesticides applications and landscapers  
21 and arborists. I was concerned and educated by  
22 the process of this proposed legislation. And  
23 thank you, Amy, for speaking on that.

24           I have been speaking to my organization  
25 for the past two years, and to other organizations

1 around the state, about the need for industry to  
2 develop best management practices of fertilizer  
3 use, so that we wouldn't see any proposed  
4 legislation, that industry perhaps could set the  
5 guidelines for controlling these applications  
6 ourselves and that we could be proactive.  
7 Unfortunately, being proactive is a very difficult  
8 thing in many industries, and we often react to  
9 proposed legislation.

10 I had been working with Cornell  
11 Cooperative Extension over the past year in  
12 developing some proposed best management practices  
13 for Suffolk County on fertilizer applications,  
14 something simple to be used by both industry  
15 professionals and homeowners. And perhaps at some  
16 point we could share with you what progress we've  
17 made in that area.

18 I know that someone had mentioned, Mr.  
19 Starkie had mentioned research at Cornell on the  
20 evidence of how healthy turf does protect runoff  
21 of materials into groundwater and into estuaries  
22 and bays. And I think this committee, as well as  
23 county officials, really should look at a resource  
24 that we have, which is Cornell University and  
25 their land grant college and cooperative extension

1 and all of the fine people that we have that are  
2 connected with them who know so much about our  
3 concerns and our industries here in Suffolk  
4 County.

5 I know that in doing some research last  
6 night I spent a lot of time looking over the  
7 Chesapeake Bay Restoration Project that was put  
8 together a number of years ago by the Department  
9 of Environment in Maryland, and I've supplied some  
10 of that paperwork to you. But they didn't look at  
11 just one part of possible pollution to the  
12 Chesapeake estuary. They looked at all aspects of  
13 it and put it into a comprehensive program that  
14 attached everything. And that had to do with air  
15 pollution, corporate pollution, farm pollution,  
16 all phases.

17 One of the things that I found  
18 interesting is that a lot of the nitrogen fixing  
19 in water is air pollution. So there are a lot of  
20 things that apply to the pollution or possible  
21 pollution of the waterways that are perhaps not  
22 being considered.

23 One of the things that they are doing in  
24 the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Project is a fund  
25 surcharge calculated for the discharge of nitrogen

1 effluent by cesspool, by cesspool and septic tank.  
2 And I've provided a copy of their surcharge to  
3 homeowners and businesses that fund their  
4 reclamation and preservation project. And it  
5 breaks down to the annual surcharge per household  
6 is only \$2.50 a month. But multiply that by the  
7 population in Suffolk County and that would give  
8 you a fairly good budget for education and  
9 planting. So just an idea.

10 Also you were talking, David McMaster  
11 was talking about soil sampling, and I have some  
12 of that information in my package here I'll also  
13 provide you with.

14 The Westchester County Board of  
15 Legislators are now looking at something  
16 different, which is phosphorous regulation,  
17 because of the Croton watershed and fresh water  
18 problems in Westchester. And they talk about  
19 exemptions of certain industries, and also they  
20 say that soil tests conducted within the past  
21 three years confirming that phosphorous is  
22 necessary would exempt people. So, again, to  
23 stress the need for best management practices and  
24 for soil testing.

25 I also wanted to make a comment on the

1 fact that, and Pat has mentioned to me that he is  
2 one of the few industry people that has been  
3 responsible -- I'm not buttering you up, Pat -- to  
4 be active on this committee. And I know that, and  
5 I apologize for any deficiencies of other people,  
6 industry people who are not in attendance.

7 There are other industry people who  
8 would be more than happy to spend the time that's  
9 necessary to work with you. I offer my services  
10 to fill in, if necessary. I'm sure there are  
11 other people in the room who would do so as well.

12 So I don't know if I've gone over my  
13 five minutes.

14 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much.

15 As Mr. Iurka was speaking, I realized  
16 that I was negligent in having the members of the  
17 board not just identify themselves by name, but  
18 also letting you know our different affiliations,  
19 because we did try to have some balance here. But  
20 before we introduce ourselves that way, are there  
21 any questions from the panel for Mr. Iurka?

22 Thank you very much for spending the  
23 time here.

24 Can we start with you, Amy?

25 MEMBER JUCHATZ: I work in the Office of

1 Cancer Awareness and Environmental Assessment in  
2 the Department of Energy in Suffolk County.

3 MEMBER SCARPITTA: Sal Scarpitta, Public  
4 Health in Suffolk County.

5 THE CHAIRPERSON: I'm Legislator  
6 Viloría-Fisher. And I'm chairman of the  
7 Environmental Committee of the legislature, and I  
8 represent the Fifth District, Suffolk County.

9 MEMBER YEH: Suffolk County Griffin Land  
10 Management.

11 MEMBER VOGES: Pat Voges, NSLGA.

12 MEMBER SOUTH: Paddy South from the  
13 Suffolk County Water Authority.

14 MEMBER ANDERS: I'm Eileen Anders,  
15 master gardener and homeowner.

16 THE CHAIRPERSON: That way you have an  
17 idea of where people are coming from.

18 And we do have somebody from Cornell who  
19 has been at the meetings. We have Tamson, but we  
20 also have Caroline Kiang who has been sitting, and  
21 Jeff Peters from Cornell have been great  
22 representatives of the industry.

23 Mr. Behersky?

24 MR. BEHERSKY: Thank you for your time.

25 I speak as someone who's been in the

1 industry since 1979 of pesticide applications and  
2 lawn care work and during this span ever since. I  
3 just want to address a couple of items of concern.

4 Number one, you know, the one that  
5 really got me and got me to come here is the  
6 notion that one pound of nitrogen is sufficient  
7 for lawn care. And that was put in that letter  
8 that came from the County Executive and is  
9 completely false, wrong.

10 I can't think of anybody that's more  
11 conservative about how we apply materials on lawns  
12 than the cooperative extension service, and  
13 they'll be glad to tell you that one pound per  
14 year on turf means destruction. Lawns will just  
15 fall apart, decay, and you will lose a valuable  
16 barrier.

17 Two potential problems when you let turf  
18 disappear. Well-maintained turf filters air  
19 pollution, and a lot of that air pollution  
20 contains nitrogen, so you're losing a barrier;  
21 also creates safe play surfaces, not to mention  
22 the aesthetic value.

23 Professionally applied fertilizers do  
24 not leach into the groundwater.

25 The real sources of nitrogen hitting our

1 groundwater, as everyone knows but doesn't say, is  
2 really the septic systems. Nitrogen is coming  
3 from cesspools which are sunk 15 to 40 feet deep  
4 in the ground to reach the sand layer to allow  
5 liquids to penetrate the groundwater. That's  
6 their job. The point is, we're adding nitrogen  
7 from sewage to them. That's how the vast, vast  
8 majority of nitrogen is getting in.

9           And there are other things that people  
10 don't even understand. Look at the plants. Green  
11 plants leach nitrogen naturally. A thirty-foot  
12 tall oak tree contributes four and-a-half pounds  
13 of nitrogen through fallen leaves and acorns per  
14 year. That's four and-a-half pounds from one oak  
15 tree, and we see a lot of ninety foot trees  
16 around.

17           Getting back to that one pound is not  
18 enough, I want to point out that two major turf  
19 diseases are caused by insufficient nitrogen,  
20 those being dollar spot and red thread cause  
21 tremendous damage to turf. Also, seed lawns  
22 cannot be established without more fertilizer than  
23 that, more nitrogen than that.

24           Another part of this is how devastating  
25 this type legislation would be to the people in my

1 industry. And people in my industry, it's not  
2 only them, it's their employees and the taxes that  
3 we pay. My own business I pay around eighty  
4 thousand dollars a year in sales tax which  
5 supports this county. I pay about \$28,000 a year  
6 in Workmen's Comp.

7 I have fourteen full-time employees.  
8 And I'm proud to say that three of my employees  
9 over the years, while working for me, have been  
10 able to marry, buy a home and start families in  
11 this county.

12 You know, the thing is this, too, that  
13 homeowners in this county want nice lawns. They  
14 don't even know the right reasons for wanting  
15 them. They don't understand that a lawn prevents  
16 erosion and that a lawn filters air pollution.  
17 It's aesthetic. They want beautiful lawns.

18 We need solid turf or we lose businesses  
19 like sod farming, landscaping, golf courses and  
20 the lawn care industry.

21 You know, we thought of an analogy, a  
22 comparison of what's leaching through septic  
23 systems and what's leaching through professionally  
24 applied fertilizer. It's like if you can turn  
25 back time, you would love to avert disaster, like

1 the Titanic. It's like focusing on the ice cubes  
2 in their cocktails rather than the icebergs  
3 floating in the ocean.

4 And one last thing. Elected officials  
5 are willing to represent their constituents. And  
6 I would tell you that in my industry my clientele  
7 often unleashes their wrath when they're not happy  
8 about the quality of their lawn, the quantity of  
9 their lawn and how it looks. I can tell you that  
10 that would be unleashed on our elected officials  
11 who take away their opportunity and their right to  
12 have a nice looking lawn.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause)

15 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much,  
16 Mr. Behersky.

17 MR. BEHERSKY: Any questions?

18 MEMBER ANDERS: Eileen Anders. I just  
19 want to address something to you. At the last few  
20 meetings one thing that has come up is that on  
21 Long Island the aesthetics of the perfect lawn is  
22 really ingrained, it's called Lawn Island for a  
23 reason. And one of the things we have to address  
24 is to educate people that you can have a lovely  
25 lawn and all the wonderful things about a lawn but

1 you don't have to kill it.

2 We put down a tremendous amount of  
3 fertilizer. So I want you to understand that  
4 we're also trying to get people educated, change  
5 their perception of what they need outside. And  
6 not just homeowners, other parts of the community.

7 So we're aware that you're up against  
8 that wall with some people that want perfect  
9 lawns, like the Scott's commercial on TV.

10 MR. BEHERSKY: But I would just remind  
11 you, you're not looking at necessarily having the  
12 perfect lawn. We're talking about having lawns at  
13 all, and that the proposal of one pound of  
14 nitrogen will not allow people to have lawns at  
15 all.

16 MEMBER ANDERS: We've been educated  
17 about that both by Pat and also by somebody else  
18 from Cornell. We are aware that that is just not  
19 sufficient. But, again, the committee did not  
20 give that number. That's not our number. And I  
21 understand that you see that it's your livelihood  
22 and employees and everything else. We're aware  
23 that would cause other problems.

24 MEMBER JUCHATZ: I guess my question  
25 is a little bit sort of along those lines, about

1 the aestheticsness, because that really is, even  
2 though nitrogen seems to be the focus on the  
3 ground here, the focus of our group really is to  
4 sort of address somewhat what we think is the  
5 orientation of the general public out there about  
6 these perfect lawns which they hire you to give  
7 them. And so I guess my question to you is what  
8 kind of pressure do you feel and what does that do  
9 to you. I mean you must feel -- Do most of your  
10 clients, I guess, are they really demanding that  
11 perfect lawn? What percentage of your clients, I  
12 guess, demand that perfect lawn?

13 MR. BEHERSKY: Put it this way, when  
14 you're hiring a service and paying good money you  
15 want results. The point of this is not about the  
16 results and the aesthetics of lawns, because, in  
17 my view, one way of looking at the aesthetics of a  
18 lawn are a side benefit to the other benefits of  
19 having lawns, which is to prevent erosion.

20 MEMBER JUCHATZ: I know that.

21 MR. BEHERSKY: It's not all about how  
22 much nitrogen does it take to make a beautiful  
23 lawn.

24 MEMBER JUCHATZ: Nitrogen aside, I know  
25 why you want nitrogen and I know why you need

1 nitrogen. But I'm trying to get at the philosophy  
2 of the homeowners out there, because that's what  
3 we're trying to deal with.

4           What percentage of the clients that you  
5 have demand a perfect lawn? And, I guess, do you  
6 see a trend at all in your clientele as far as is  
7 that on the increase as far as they're really  
8 particular, they want no weeds? Or are you seeing  
9 perhaps a decline in that? Or is it changing at  
10 all? Are some of them saying, I'm really  
11 interested in going with less pesticides?

12           If you can just talk a little bit about  
13 that, you know, about the attitude of your  
14 clientele.

15           MR. BEHERSKY: What I hear are concerns  
16 about the safety of our products. I hear it all  
17 the time. They want to be sure that their  
18 children and their pets -- funny, we hear more  
19 about pets than children. That's a little scary.

20           And I do see more and more pressure on  
21 me to reassure my customers that I give them  
22 what's labeled, and that I feel, professionally  
23 applied, these are safe around children and pets.  
24 That is my opinion.

25           But I also see that people also want

1 that aesthetic quality, no question about it. My  
2 clientele is a demanding one. They want safety  
3 and they want results, they want it all.

4 MS. JUCHATZ: So you don't see some  
5 clients that are trying to trade off, like some of  
6 your clients saying I wouldn't mind if you use  
7 less pesticides, I'll take a trade for, you know,  
8 a weed or two or less green or something like  
9 that? You don't have some clients that want less?

10 MR. BEHERSKY: Those people are not  
11 coming to me. I'll be quite honest with you.  
12 That's the best answer I can give.

13 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.  
14 Are there any other questions? Okay.  
15 Thank you again for being here.  
16 The next speaker in Larry Wilson.

17 MR. WILSON: Thanks for having this  
18 meeting today.

19 My name is Larry Wilson. I'm a  
20 landscaper and a certified applicator, and I  
21 volunteer as a chairman for the New York Alliance  
22 for Environmental Concerns.

23 It's been a very interesting and  
24 informative meeting so far.

25 I'd also like to speak to the aesthetic

1 question that Amy posed, because I think that's  
2 key in all of this. Of course, we do what we do,  
3 and we work on behalf of the homeowners, the  
4 people that hire us to do lawn care. And I have  
5 seen and been asked questions.

6 I can't really see a trend developing  
7 that, you know, that is going clearly in one  
8 direction. Let me just put it that way.

9 I will tell you the story of a customer  
10 where the wife called me. I went out to the home.  
11 She had some questions about what I was using and  
12 when I was going to use it. And I explained to  
13 her what I do, what my strategies were, and after  
14 a short time I suggested that they consider an  
15 organic program.

16 I also test soils myself, I have a  
17 little kit that I carry around in my truck. It's  
18 not as comprehensive, maybe, as a soil test that  
19 could be done in a laboratory, but it certainly  
20 gives me an idea of what I'm looking at. It's  
21 something that I can do rather easily and quickly  
22 just to get an idea. You know, maybe I won't get  
23 the trace elements. I'll certainly get the pH,  
24 and it'll do a good job on the nutrients, which is  
25 really what I'm looking for.

1           Getting back to that homeowner, I think  
2           it was maybe the month of June or July I got a  
3           call from the husband this time who clearly told  
4           me that the results were not what he expected.  
5           And he said that we're going on vacation on such  
6           and such a date, please let me know what you can  
7           do for this lawn between now and then; you know,  
8           to get the lawn back to what he thought was an  
9           acceptable standard.

10           And you find people with all sorts of  
11           opinions about what the lawn should look like.  
12           There are some, clearly, that say we don't even  
13           want fertilizer, and that's really not much of a  
14           lawn to speak of. And then there's the homeowner  
15           that wants a program and, let me put it this way,  
16           and are very specific about their tolerance level.  
17           They also have kids. They also have a dog. You  
18           know, they also have maybe four thousand, five  
19           thousand square feet of lawn. And so they're very  
20           specific about their expectations.

21           I can't really say that a trend is  
22           developing. And I see all sorts of information,  
23           if you will, from various groups about the meadow  
24           aesthetic and not cutting the grass at all and not  
25           watering it. And I don't see that catching on at

1 all, especially in the communities, the very nice  
2 communities out here in Suffolk County.

3 I'm from Westchester, like I said. And  
4 I don't see the meadow aesthetic really catching  
5 on. I don't see it.

6 With regard to, you know, the matter  
7 with nitrogen and phosphorous, I was at the  
8 hearings in Westchester County, and there is a  
9 great deal of information that was presented  
10 there. And it's generally felt that a regulation  
11 is not really going to go so far as to make a  
12 difference there.

13 Of course, we've covered the different  
14 sources of nitrogen and phosphorous. And, you  
15 know, the way that nitrogen and phosphorous finds  
16 its way into the waterways. And there is really  
17 no consensus that, for instance -- And I don't  
18 want to belabor the point about a certain mandate,  
19 for instance. There is certainly a question  
20 about, you know, the efficacy and the results that  
21 such a measure, you know, would achieve in terms  
22 of reducing the nitrogen and phosphorous load.

23 I also have a copy of the Memorandum of  
24 Understanding between the Chesapeake Executive  
25 Council, the headwater state jurisdiction, and

1 members of the lawn care products manufacturing  
2 industry. It was quite an impressive document  
3 that was signed by the governors of five states  
4 and also the District of Columbia, the Scott's  
5 company, the Lebanon Company, the fertilizer  
6 manufacturers. And it has specific goals about  
7 reducing, you know, the nutrient load by fifty  
8 percent, and it explained how to do that. And a  
9 good portion of that, of course, is by educating  
10 the public.

11 And I know that the temptation is  
12 always, well, we'll pass a law and that will cure  
13 the problem and we'll go on our merry way, which  
14 isn't always the case. It's more expensive, of  
15 course, to educate the public, and it does require  
16 a significant amount of resources, but I really  
17 feel you can get there if you're committed to do  
18 it. And over time, various programs can work.

19 We, as professionals, we rely a great  
20 deal on the Cornell University and its extension  
21 system for educating us and getting us information  
22 about how we can formulate, for instance, a best  
23 management practices document, and it's something  
24 that we had been working on.

25 It's just very difficult to get a

1 consensus on this. And we have, you know, we look  
2 to other states. We look to all sorts of sources  
3 of information to, you know, to hammer out a  
4 document. We've had some difficulties. We've had  
5 some successes.

6 So, again, I really feel that a  
7 voluntary program, a partnership, if you will,  
8 between government and industry will go a lot  
9 farther than especially some arbitrary legislation  
10 on the rate of nitrogen or phosphorous or anything  
11 else that would be very difficult to police in the  
12 first place.

13 Again, thank you for all your time.

14 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

15 I have a question for you because I  
16 believe it was Mr. Iurka who also mentioned the  
17 industry doing some of the education and best  
18 management practices. And one of the things that  
19 we have been speaking about in this Task Force is  
20 water, you know, irrigation. And we haven't  
21 talked about it today because I think the catalyst  
22 for many of the comments is the piece of  
23 legislation that was proposed by the County  
24 Executive's office. And that hasn't been our  
25 thrust, as was explained before. But when they

1 spoke in Westchester County at those hearings, and  
2 the Chesapeake Bay Plan, did they address water  
3 use and --

4 MR. WILSON: Not so much in Westchester  
5 County, no, they didn't.

6 THE CHAIRPERSON: We have the Water  
7 Authority represented, so we want to talk about  
8 that.

9 MR. WILSON: I have seen proposals in  
10 Albany also to license and regulate those doing  
11 irrigation. And I'm not sure that I --

12 THE CHAIRPERSON: I'm not talking about  
13 legislation. I'm talking about education.

14 MR. WILSON: I'm not talking about that  
15 either. But, actually, I do irrigation service  
16 and repair, and I'll take a look at a clock or a  
17 clock timer and I'll take a look at the weather  
18 conditions. And I'm constantly fiddling around  
19 with those clocks and timers because I believe  
20 that, first of all, the customers don't know what  
21 the heck it is and how to set it or how to  
22 approach it. They rely on us to do that.

23 And I agree with Eileen, that a healthy  
24 lawn does not have to gobble up, you know, every  
25 resource under the sun. There is really no reason

1 to, you know, overwater a lawn.

2 THE CHAIRPERSON: As a rule of thumb,  
3 what do you recommend for your customers?

4 MR. WILSON: It depends on the weather.

5 If it's the middle of August and hot and  
6 dry, you might have to water every day for a short  
7 time, maybe fifteen or twenty minutes.

8 Depending on the amount of sunlight, the  
9 soil, of course, you know, would influence the  
10 amount of time you would irrigate a lawn.

11 If it's in the middle of August and it's  
12 raining every day, there is no reason to have it  
13 on at all. It's something that if you have a  
14 system it's automatic. So if you look at the  
15 book, you know, the literature, you could set the  
16 clock timer to do anything you want it to do.

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: What we'd have to do  
18 is see if we can educate the public to do a little  
19 less watering. What they're doing is fertilizing  
20 and overwatering, and sometimes that's not a good  
21 combination.

22 The rain sensors, I assume that's  
23 becoming more sophisticated now, the rain sensors.  
24 But you see a lot of sprinkler systems coming on  
25 in the rain.

1           MR. WILSON: The newest innovation is a  
2 wireless rain sensor. Used to be you'd have to  
3 run a wire to the controller and the valves to  
4 install a rain sensor. Now it's so easy. They  
5 cost less than fifty dollars, and they're  
6 wireless, easy to install.

7           THE CHAIRPERSON: And they're pretty  
8 effective?

9           MR. WILSON: Yeah.

10          Again, most people think that because  
11 it's a relatively low-cost addition to an  
12 irrigation system, most people just install them  
13 as part of the system. It's a way of servicing  
14 them and making sure that they're working  
15 properly.

16          THE CHAIRPERSON: Mine doesn't always  
17 work. That's why I have these questions. I have  
18 to go out there in the rain and turn off my system  
19 manually.

20          MR. WILSON: It's a simple device,  
21 actually. You can actually adjust a setting to  
22 shut it off at a quarter inch, a half-inch, an  
23 eighth of an inch. So there's settings on there.

24          THE CHAIRPERSON: I didn't mean to make  
25 this a personal consultation. Sorry.

1 MR. WILSON: And, again, a little common  
2 sense goes a long way.

3 THE CHAIRPERSON: But I heard people  
4 talking about water, and that's something that we  
5 have in this Task Force talked about. I know that  
6 legislation is something that sends up the red  
7 flag, and we go back to saying what we try to do  
8 is educate the public.

9 So as we're educating, I just want to  
10 get your sense of where irritation comes in in  
11 your order of priorities in educating the public  
12 and what kind of guidelines we can give them.

13 Not everyone has sprinklers. If they  
14 do, should they set them for every other day  
15 unless we have a really scorching heat? You know,  
16 we've been talking about giving them some type of  
17 guidelines on that.

18 MR. WILSON: We'd be very happy to offer  
19 you any expertise and any information through the  
20 NSLGA, a resource on irrigation, if you should  
21 want to approach that.

22 Just the last thing, one of my  
23 colleagues had mentioned a surcharge, if you will,  
24 of two dollars and fifty cents. I know if you  
25 assess \$2.50 per household you'd have an education

1 campaign that would be second to none in America.  
2 It would cost really very little for the County of  
3 Suffolk to implement some sort of voluntary  
4 program for the citizens, for the homeowners, and  
5 I believe would go a long way.

6 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank very much.  
7 Any questions?

8 MEMBER VOGES: Larry, could you come fix  
9 her --

10 MR. WILSON: No charge.

11 MR. STARKIE: Can't do that.

12 THE CHAIRPERSON: Next is Deborah Green.

13 MS. GREEN: Good morning. Thank you for  
14 letting me speak.

15 I'm Deborah Green with the Long Island  
16 Arboricultural organization and also a  
17 professional arborist. And I'm not going to say  
18 anything that you haven't already heard today.

19 I want to reiterate some of the things  
20 that have been said, and one of them is the Best  
21 Management Practices that was developed by the  
22 tree industry is really a great guide in  
23 determining what amendments should be put back in  
24 the soil based on soil testing.

25 And I just wanted to say that, as an

1 industry, we've adopted Best Management Practices  
2 and have been utilizing it since about 1998 or so.  
3 So we recognize that nitrogen, et cetera, can be a  
4 problem with groundwater. And we feel, through  
5 these best management practices, that we've  
6 addressed those issues professionally.

7 Thank you.

8 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much.

9 Any questions for Miss Green?

10 Thank you for coming down.

11 Bruce Karas. I hope I'm reading your  
12 name correctly. I couldn't tell if that was a --

13 MR. KARAS: Bruce Karas, K-A-R-A-S.

14 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

15 MR. KARAS: You know, the thing that  
16 brought me here to the meeting here really was I  
17 wanted to support the industry and I wanted to  
18 address the one pound of nitrogen proposal, but it  
19 seems that everybody's already spoken about that.

20 So I think that maybe what I can do for you is  
21 answer some questions as a person who owns his own  
22 company and serves over fifteen hundred lawn  
23 customers, condominium customers.

24 I can tell you, the general public, the  
25 reason they hire us and want us is because they

1 want a nice lawn. It doesn't necessarily have to  
2 be the greenest lawn on the block.

3 Some customers, that is what they want.  
4 They'll back out their driveway, look up and down  
5 the street, and complain to me, Look at the guy  
6 across the street, he's greener, what's wrong with  
7 you, what are you doing wrong here? And it could  
8 be two weeks after a fertilizer application and  
9 the lawn looks great and he has a nice color, but  
10 it isn't that right tint that they're looking for.

11 As far as weeds, when someone walks out  
12 and sees a bunch of dandelions in their front  
13 lawn, they're not happy. They don't want to know  
14 that we're reducing the use of pesticides and  
15 we're trying to do the best thing that we can do  
16 for the environment. They want to know why are  
17 those weeds there, we have to get rid of them.

18 So somewhere there has to be a happy  
19 medium. And I can tell you that when people do  
20 their own work that misapplication of pesticides  
21 and fertilizer and everything else is something  
22 that is very common. Okay?

23 I run into new customers that will call  
24 me for the reason that their front lawn looks like  
25 some sort of a thing off an Etch-a-Sketch where

1 they took their drop spreader, burnt out strips of  
2 turf, missed areas, and they've got squiggly lines  
3 and burnt out areas every place. And they ask me,  
4 What am I doing wrong?

5 People don't know what a thousand square  
6 feet is. People have absolutely no idea when they  
7 buy a bag for five thousand square feet how much  
8 lawn they have.

9 You ask a homeowner, you know, what the  
10 size of your lawn is. They'll tell you that it's  
11 a half-acre. Well, their property is a half-acre.  
12 Take off the house, the shrubbery, the shed, the  
13 pool and everything else, you don't have anything  
14 near a half-acre.

15 And the problem that I really see is  
16 with passing laws and regulations on the industry  
17 is that we have to deal with a lot of customers  
18 everyday and that we can't deal with every lawn,  
19 you know, as an individual. And we have to be  
20 able to buy products and go out and do twenty  
21 lawns a day. And we have to have, you know,  
22 somehow have a reasonable amount of nitrogen  
23 that's going to keep a majority of the people  
24 happy and put it down pretty much on everybody,  
25 unless there is a particular case that we know

1 where a certain lawn, you know, just doesn't  
2 require it and/or requires more and we have to  
3 make some sort of an adjustment.

4 And by having a professional do the  
5 work, I think the work is done much better.  
6 We have the groundwater. And the public is  
7 protected much better than having people who need  
8 only to walk into K-Mart or any other retailer on  
9 Long Island and buy just about the same products  
10 that we use and then go out and do it themselves  
11 without any training whatsoever. This is what I  
12 see going on all the time.

13 And I can tell you, people, when they  
14 have a problem after they've invested ten thousand  
15 dollars in sod, when grubs start to eat it, the  
16 thing that comes to my mind is give me the most  
17 powerful, strongest stuff I can get, I want to  
18 kill them.

19 And I get in arguments with my customers  
20 when I put down an application and they're telling  
21 me, Do it heavy, put down extra, do it twice,  
22 charge me twice, I don't care, I want double. And  
23 I try to explain to them that there's a way of  
24 doing things, that there's laws so that you do  
25 things the right way. If you can kill a grub with

1 a BB gun, you don't use a nuclear bomb. But  
2 that's not what they want to hear.

3 We have to deal with these people every  
4 day out there. And how we earn our living, we  
5 earn our living by doing commonsense things, by  
6 doing what it takes to satisfy the majority of my  
7 customers. A pound of nitrogen isn't going to  
8 satisfy any of them.

9 THE CHAIRPERSON: A pound of nitrogen a  
10 year, again, is something that we've looked at.  
11 And we've been advised, you know, when we've had  
12 our own meetings, that that's not a realistic  
13 number.

14 Can I ask you this, Mr. Karas? If there  
15 were a law with a reasonable parameter, in some  
16 way wouldn't that make it easier for you to say to  
17 your customer, I can't put it down as heavy as you  
18 want because there's a law that this is the only  
19 ratio that's legal to put down? If it were  
20 reasonable.

21 MR. KARAS: If it were a reasonable law  
22 which is easy to comply with, then, yes, the  
23 answer to that question would be yes.

24 THE CHAIRPERSON: It would give you  
25 cover.

1 MR. KARAS: Yes.

2 What I've found in many cases is that  
3 people who make the laws don't take into account,  
4 you know, what we run into day-to-day, and take  
5 some of our ability for us to make decisions away.  
6 Okay?

7 With pesticide laws, especially the  
8 trend is getting to be more how to obey the law  
9 and how to get by for the least amount of money  
10 with the least amount of notifying of neighbors,  
11 with the least amount of posting of signs, and  
12 obeying all these signs and doing everything right  
13 so that nobody is on your case, so that you're not  
14 getting violations or getting sued, rather than  
15 going to the homeowner and saying what's the best  
16 thing for me to do here today.

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: Let me give you an  
18 example. A few years ago there was a stir, quite  
19 a bit of stir about wells on the east end showing  
20 that there were some contaminants and et cetera,  
21 and we thought that it would be good to have the  
22 agricultural community use less fertilizer and  
23 pesticides. But rather than try to have a law to  
24 make them do that, because we know that they have  
25 to make a living, I put together a task force

1 including farmers and nursery people. And working  
2 with the Agricultural Environment Management state  
3 program the farmers are voluntarily working with  
4 our technicians. Because every crop, as you know,  
5 has different needs and different requirements.  
6 But we have quite a number of farms who have  
7 signed up. And with best management practices  
8 they're actually saving some money on some things  
9 because they're getting the best practice, the  
10 irrigation. They're getting grants from the  
11 federal government.

12 And what we want to do, and that's why  
13 we have these hearings, why we have somebody like  
14 Pat on the Task Force, is because we want to have  
15 input from the industry so that we're working  
16 together to try and minimize what's going into  
17 your environment, and trying to educate the  
18 public.

19 I walk my dog every day. And there's  
20 one family that has such thick, thick sod, and  
21 they overwater it, and it feels like a sponge. We  
22 have sidewalks where I live. But if I happen to  
23 step off, it's a sponge. And I don't know how  
24 they don't have all sorts of disease, because it's  
25 so wet, so much moisture held in it.

1           But your input is important to us.  
2       We're listening to what you're saying. But we  
3       also want you to go back and say, okay, we do have  
4       a problem. And, yes, the problem -- I mean  
5       nitrogen oxide comes out of our power plants and  
6       dissipates down and goes into our water.

7           I'm not trying to -- You're my last  
8       speaker, but I'm asking everyone. We know the  
9       problem comes from many sources. But what we're  
10      trying to do is -- You know, I also introduced  
11      legislation to lower the emissions on power  
12      plants, so we are addressing that. We're trying  
13      to get cars that are more energy saving, so we're  
14      trying to address that.

15           So we're trying to look at all of the  
16      different sources and to take our responsibility  
17      very seriously, and the professionals we're  
18      looking to to help us educate the public that they  
19      don't have to water twice a day.

20           MR. KARAS: Well, that's something that  
21      oftentimes comes up in my business. We get phone  
22      calls all the time about watering. And we have  
23      problems with lack of watering where, you know,  
24      people have brown areas in their lawns that are  
25      drying out, that we think they burn them out with

1 too much fertilizer or too many pesticides or some  
2 other reason like that.

3 So we educate people both ways, over-  
4 watering and underwatering.

5 As far as the mushy lawn, that is going  
6 to cause a problem. And I make recommendations to  
7 all my customers on how to water and ask them to  
8 water once a day during the really hot periods and  
9 once every two or three days otherwise, if that's  
10 what's needed.

11 And I also try to educate them about the  
12 difference between sunny areas and shade areas,  
13 which really is a big problem. Most sprinkler  
14 systems are set up so that one zone covers deep  
15 shade and full sun. Either you're going to  
16 underwater the full sun area or cause root rot in  
17 the shade, in the same zone.

18 I further educate customers to either  
19 change the way the zones are made up or use  
20 sprinkler heads that have a smaller orifice size  
21 that will allow water to come out of the head, so  
22 you're going to water the same zone for a half  
23 hour but get a different amount in the shade than  
24 you get coming out in the sun by using a different  
25 size orifice in your sprinkler head.

1           So waters is a big thing. And a lot of  
2           people don't know how to water correctly, and they  
3           need to know the recommendations on watering  
4           change from week to week all year long.

5           And one of the complaints we sometimes  
6           get, too, is we'll have one guy go out and tell a  
7           customer that they have to water a certain way and  
8           then three weeks later another guy may come out  
9           and say you're overwatering, and then they think  
10          you don't know what you're talking about.

11          You have to have general recommendations  
12          that depend on water conditions in order to water  
13          correctly. And education of the public is  
14          something I'd be for a hundred percent and would  
15          make my job a lot easier.

16          THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

17          That was an interesting suggestion  
18          regarding the size of the orifice. If you have  
19          one zone, people aren't going to want to -- you  
20          know, that's expensive to create different zones,  
21          but you can accommodate that with the size of the  
22          orifice.

23          MR. KARAS: Yes.

24          THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much.

25          Any other questions?

1           MEMBER ANDERS: You're a popular man.

2           How easy do you think it would be to  
3 educate people to possibly reduce parts of their  
4 lawn maybe to a ground cover or something else  
5 and/or to choose a different type of grass?

6 People usually want the Kentucky bluegrass sort of  
7 mentality. Do you think many of your customers  
8 would be willing to consider either one of those  
9 alternatives? I know, not crabgrass, no.

10           MR. KARAS: Nobody wants crabgrass. But  
11 when we do seeding on a lawn we'll use different  
12 grasses in areas of the lawn, depending on shade  
13 and sunny conditions.

14           But in the sun, generally the Kentucky  
15 Bluegrasses blend the best, look the best. They  
16 recover from damage the easiest, and they're going  
17 to give you a nicer, thicker, more beautiful lawn.  
18 And some of the grasses may require less water but  
19 may require more nitrogen. So Kentucky bluegrass  
20 general seems to be the best all-around sunny  
21 areas grass that's available. That's pretty much  
22 what everybody wants.

23           MEMBER ANDERS: What about some of the  
24 newer fescues?

25           MR. KARAS: Some of the newer fescues

1 are good, the thinner bladed.

2 The old-fashioned Kentucky 31 was not a  
3 good grass because it grows in clumps, doesn't  
4 feel good when you walk on it with bare feet. And  
5 when it thins out it doesn't fill in. Rhizomes  
6 going under.

7 With a lot of these fescues you have a  
8 tillering effect where you have one plant and out  
9 from the base of that a shoot comes up, and you  
10 end up with clumps and areas that aren't filling  
11 in. And then those areas that are bare, weeds are  
12 going to grow there. And then obviously that's  
13 not working as a filter, which has been brought up  
14 by other people that, you know, grass is a good  
15 filter. It cools our environment, protects our  
16 environment and beautifies our environment.

17 MEMBER ANDERS: And not to take ground  
18 covers away from the landscapers so you wouldn't  
19 have a lawn to cut, but what about minimizing  
20 certain parts of ground? Even if it's just hostas  
21 in the shade as opposed to trying to keep planting  
22 a lawn in the shade. Do you know what I mean?

23 MR. KARAS: I recommend that. When  
24 customers ask me, and they have a dense shade  
25 area, many customers do aerate and seed, I tell

1       them you're better off with a ground cover or  
2       putting in some rocks or to think about putting in  
3       some landscaping with shrubs, because I know that  
4       a year later from now there're going to be  
5       complaints: Why did I spend \$500 last year? Look  
6       at it.

7                It makes a lot of sense in dense shade  
8       to recommend ground covers, and there are things  
9       that will grow there.

10               MEMBER ANDERS: Thank you.

11               THE CHAIRPERSON: You're the last  
12       speaker, so you get to answer all the questions.

13               MR. KARAS: I don't mind.

14               MEMBER VOGES: You said homeowners can  
15       go out and buy about the same fertilizer as we do  
16       and put it down in excess. There are still  
17       fertilizers being sold out there with quick-  
18       release water soluble nitrogen in it. And having  
19       moved on, people haven't been educated enough to  
20       use the slow-releases and the water soluble  
21       nitrogen.

22               I'd like, by a show of hands here, to  
23       see how many of you guys who are in the industry  
24       are still using fast-acting nitrogen without at  
25       least fifty percent of UYN (phonetic)?

1 Nobody, right?

2 And the reason is because Cornell  
3 Cooperative Extension, in its infamous ways, in  
4 the last two hundred years have educated us and  
5 said this is what works and this is what's healthy  
6 for the environment. And that's what this task  
7 force is about, to educate the homeowner so that  
8 you maybe use a better fertilizer and not put  
9 those fast-acting nitrogens out there any more.

10 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, Pat.

11 MEMBER SCARPITTA: You took away my  
12 thunder. That was kind of my question. We're  
13 charged to create a brochure to educate the  
14 homeowners, and by no means do we want to take  
15 business away from your livelihoods.

16 You're at the forefront of teaching the  
17 public what you do professionally, but we want to  
18 get the homeowners, give them the information they  
19 need if they do not use professional applicators.  
20 And I'm curious if anyone knows, of the six  
21 thousand homes in Suffolk, about what percentage  
22 use professional persons like yourself? Is it a  
23 hard sell? Is it a third? Not counting  
24 commercial.

25 MR. KARAS: My guess would be two-thirds

1 don't.

2 MR. STARKIE: You have a lot of people  
3 who don't apply any product at all, and you can  
4 pick them out easily as you drive down the  
5 boulevard.

6 THE CHAIRPERSON: Wait. I need you to  
7 speak at the podium because --

8 MR. STARKIE: George Starkie again. I  
9 have a retail garden center. And I think some of  
10 this should be put onto the industry's shoulder.

11 In Nassau County we have placards that  
12 have to be up on the shelf basically telling the  
13 homeowners that there are options and alternatives  
14 and you should ask the professionals, which that's  
15 us. And some people do take advantage of that.  
16 I think the language is that there could be some  
17 less toxic or nonpesticide products that might  
18 achieve the results. And these are placards that  
19 the Department of Health came up with and are up  
20 every spring when we set our shelves.

21 Also, it would be a no-brainer for the  
22 industry to come up with a continuous loop tape,  
23 and I would have no problem in my fertilizer  
24 section having a tape continuously running getting  
25 that message out. Because those are the people

1 you want to reach.

2 You can do a pamphlet, but then you're  
3 going to be mass-mailing to people that don't care  
4 or don't do anything anyway or have a professional  
5 and say this doesn't pertain to me.

6 I think the best economical way is to  
7 get the retailer, I would suggest, to put a  
8 continuous loop tape on a little TV screen. With  
9 best practices, those are the people that are  
10 buying the products that are going to be doing the  
11 applications themselves. Every time you come into  
12 my store on the weekend you'll see it.

13 The best thing I want to do is for the  
14 customer not only to like the results but not to  
15 misuse the product. And the public is my  
16 customer. It's not the one sale that makes me  
17 successful, it's seeing that person come back  
18 every year. And that's critical.

19 So I think you ask of it and you'll get  
20 it.

21 I can't envision that a large company,  
22 Lebanon, the Scott company, wouldn't make  
23 something like that available to retailers to do  
24 that.

25 We also go a step further and we give

1 flags. The professionals are required by law to  
2 put out flags. We give them to every homeowner.  
3 That product has an EPA number. It's just good  
4 practice for those people to let them know that  
5 they've applied pesticides.

6 I do that voluntarily, I'm not mandated.  
7 I just think it's good practice to let your  
8 neighbors know, and it only has to be up for  
9 twenty-four hours.

10 How many homeowners come in and say, I  
11 don't need it, I have mine from last year? They  
12 recycle them. I'd think that's asking too much.  
13 And I think you can reach the people who are  
14 actually doing it.

15 There might be retailers that might not  
16 appreciate that. I think that's where the problem  
17 is. Unfortunately, now with mass marketing being  
18 what it is, you can see twenty, thirty pallets of  
19 product, people grabbing and running.

20 You know, when they do the calculations,  
21 it's not like buying a pound of cheese. You know,  
22 there'll be a 15M bag. If they do the math and  
23 say we'll buy the bigger bag, that's where you  
24 have the misapplications. I see that a lot. And  
25 in my store we don't sell anything larger than the

1 5M bag.

2 And we see, I see people coming in  
3 saying they need ten thousand. I say, I know  
4 you're wrong. People just don't know how many  
5 square feet they have.

6 So I think that's the route.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: Actually, George,  
8 we've talked about the signage retail, and that's  
9 part of the educational thrust we want. And we'll  
10 take a look at what Nassau is doing as well.

11 I just want to make sure the steno-  
12 grapher knows --

13 MR. STARKIE: I left her my business  
14 cards.

15 THE CHAIRPERSON: She doesn't need your  
16 cell number. For the record, we want to know  
17 who's speaking.

18 We have another question for Mr. Karas.

19 Were you about finished, Sal?

20 MEMBER SCARPITTA: Yes.

21 THE CHAIRPERSON: And I think -- Did you  
22 want to speak?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just wanted to  
24 speak. I might be able to address --

25 THE CHAIRPERSON: Did you speak before?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

2 THE CHAIRPERSON: I need your name,  
3 then. And we'll let Amy ask Mr. Karas --

4 MEMBER JUCHATZ: Two questions, I  
5 guess, in regard to the one pound per thousand  
6 square feet. If it had said one pound per  
7 thousand square feet per application as opposed to  
8 per year, would that be suitable?

9 MR. KARAS: Yes, it would be. One pound  
10 is sufficient.

11 MS. JUCHATZ: Also, you had mentioned  
12 about -- and this is again getting to the  
13 homeowners that you have to deal with and their  
14 attitudes. You mentioned that sometimes you run  
15 into the homeowner that, you know, says, hey, his  
16 grass is greener than mine, and, yeah, I got a  
17 dandelion here. That is something that we're  
18 really trying to address, and it's not an easy  
19 thing to address.

20 Do you have any suggestions on things  
21 that we could do in terms of an educational  
22 program?

23 MR. KARAS: You know, the education as  
24 far as the one pound per application, I think that  
25 would be an excellent idea. That's probably about

1 what most people are doing right now, and that is  
2 sufficient to give them a nice lawn.

3 The fact that the lawn doesn't have to  
4 be the greenest lawn on the block would be  
5 something good to educate people on. And I try to  
6 tell people myself all the time that over-  
7 fertilizing sometimes leads to disaster because  
8 there are fungus problems that are aggravated by  
9 too much nitrogen. And just because you have the  
10 greenest lawn on the block today doesn't mean that  
11 in three weeks from now you're not going to have  
12 dead spots and rings in your lawn and going to be  
13 very unsightly. And, also, you do too much  
14 nitrogen, you're going to need to water more.

15 You know, I hear all the time, My water  
16 bill, you should see my water bill. Well, people  
17 aren't as concerned about conserving water as they  
18 are about paying for it.

19 If they can be told how to achieve good  
20 results and use less water and save money, that's  
21 the triangle they're looking for, that's what they  
22 want. That's what we want. And we want to get  
23 them good results from what we're doing.

24 Getting back to that other question  
25 before about the percentage of people that use

1 lawn care, I think over the next few weeks if  
2 everyone keeps their eyes open in their  
3 neighborhoods you're going to see the percentage,  
4 you're going to see these yellow signs out in  
5 front of the houses, and it is a great majority.

6 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much,  
7 Mr. Karas. You've certainly been very patient.  
8 And I guess you're not the last speaker.

9 We have Mr. Frank Beyrodt.

10 MR. BEYRODT: I'm less of a speaker. I  
11 just wanted to make myself available. I represent  
12 the sod industry. We're third generation. We  
13 grow about 1,800 acres of bluegrass and other  
14 assorted varieties. And if I can be of any help  
15 to educate the community at large and the task  
16 force, I am more than willing to and would love to  
17 answer any questions you might have.

18 A lot of what you're hearing out here  
19 are great truisms. These are very professional  
20 people. Although sometimes the industry is  
21 sometimes criticized for not being overly  
22 regulated or carefully, I guess, kept in line like  
23 where other industries are kept in line. With  
24 this industry a lot of people put a lawnmower in  
25 the back of a pickup truck and call themselves

1 landscapers.

2           These are professionals. These are  
3 people who apply by law. And if I can help you,  
4 just --

5           THE CHAIRPERSON: I'm glad you mentioned  
6 that because that's been the subject of some of  
7 our discussions. And Pat's helped us with that in  
8 showing us what kind of identification --

9           MR. BEYRODT: The people who show up for  
10 the hearings are the professionals. These are the  
11 people who enjoy their trade, who want to do the  
12 best for their customers.

13           THE CHAIRPERSON: That's an important  
14 part of the educational piece for those homeowners  
15 who are hiring people to do their lawns.

16           Pat, can you just talk a little bit  
17 about some of the things you've told us on how to  
18 identify the professional landscapers and training  
19 that they have?

20           MEMBER VOGES: We have to have licenses  
21 to do what we do. We have to have continuous  
22 education to do what we do to keep our licenses.  
23 We all have to display triangles and things like  
24 that that show that we are professionals, that we  
25 do know what we're doing. And that's just the way

1 it is.

2 Unfortunately, there are probably more  
3 illegal people out there than there are legal  
4 people out there. And if this task force could do  
5 something about that, we'd all appreciate it.

6 (Applause)

7 MR. BEYRODT: It's been addressed. But  
8 in the sod industry, we almost lost a field last  
9 season to red thread, which is one of these  
10 problems if you don't put enough N into your  
11 product, makes it weak or more susceptible.

12 We almost lost about a hundred fifty  
13 acres to this kind of a disease. On top of which,  
14 the money we incur trying to take care of this  
15 disease and reign it back in and all the other  
16 applications that have to go on can not only be  
17 costly but also affect the groundwater.

18 THE CHAIRPERSON: Well, thank you very  
19 much.

20 Is there anyone else who would like to  
21 address this body?

22 The gentleman in the front. Just say  
23 your name for the record, and if you will fill out  
24 that card so I can have that.

25 MR. LEFSTEIN: My name is Stuart

1 Lefstein. My company is September's Landscaping.  
2 I'm in Nassau County, but my biggest account is  
3 CitiBank from Inwood to Riverhead right now, and  
4 they're expanding. But I just really wanted to  
5 address three people. I wanted to address Amy,  
6 Mr. South and Eileen.

7 In our industry you guys are talking  
8 about one pound per thousand of nitrogen for the  
9 year and calling nitrogen a contaminant. And I  
10 remember way back when we could sell chlordane for  
11 termites. Oh, I got termites around the house,  
12 get chlordane. You could buy it at Garden World,  
13 Flowertime. You could buy it anywhere you want.  
14 And I'm sure chlordane is still around, which is,  
15 for Long Island, Amy, we're number one for breast  
16 cancer in the whole country. So you guys are  
17 concerned about one pound per thousand. For  
18 cancer awareness, I think that, you know, belongs  
19 in Mars, outer space.

20 As far as my wife, she is a breast  
21 cancer patient. She is on all kinds of drugs to  
22 keep her alive. I tell her let's move out of here  
23 because Long Island's number one for breast  
24 cancer, and who knows what other cancers they're  
25 number one for. But I don't think it's the

1 nitrogen that's doing it. And at four pounds per  
2 thousand square feet for a season, I don't see  
3 where that really affects anything.

4 As far as the watering, we're regulated  
5 about watering. I do irrigation. We're regulated  
6 by watering. You tell us every other day you  
7 can't water before, up to ten o'clock, and you can  
8 only water again when --

9 THE CHAIRPERSON: Well, that's Nassau  
10 County.

11 MR. LEFSTEIN: That's only Nassau  
12 County? Okay. I'm sure regulation will come in  
13 Suffolk for that, too.

14 Because I guess the watering, you know,  
15 the reason why we had those rules is because we  
16 were running out of water, because we had to  
17 conserve water. Now maybe I don't think we have  
18 that kind of problem.

19 MEMBER SOUTH: We kind of jumped on that  
20 problem a lot sooner than Nassau County, so we're  
21 a lot further in terms of conserving our  
22 groundwater in Suffolk County.

23 MR. LEFSTEIN: And as far as trying to  
24 educate the homeowner, I mean everybody in Long  
25 Island wants a nice home.

1           The other reason is maybe they're  
2           getting to the age where they want out of Long  
3           Island and they need to sell their house, and the  
4           presentation of having a manicured lawn along with  
5           nice shrubs gives the person who wants to buy the  
6           house a warm feeling that they're not slobs in  
7           their house so they can sell their house.  
8           Because, for me, I want to get out of here as soon  
9           as possible, but you guys keep keeping me here.  
10          But all of those things --

11                 And we're all regulated. We all have  
12           our DEC licenses. We have our Consumer Affairs  
13           licenses. We have a license to work in Rockville  
14           Center, a license to work here in Riverhead. I  
15           mean everyone wants us to have licenses.

16                 And you're talking about one pound per  
17           thousand for the season to keep grass, you know,  
18           green. Nitrogen's the most important part for the  
19           lawn as far as keeping it green. And when you're  
20           using a slow-release, it's keeping it green, not  
21           deep green, but it's keeping it green for a period  
22           of at least eight weeks. So it's not that instant  
23           push of four five nitrogen, you know, four five  
24           zero zero, things like that.

25                 But to educate the homeowner, okay, my

1 God, they're not interested in being educated.  
2 They're not going to mow their lawn. They want us  
3 to mow their lawn. They want us to keep it green.  
4 They want us to cut their shrubs. And you are  
5 trying to educate a homeowner who's not going to  
6 listen.

7 I work in New York and I have to take  
8 the train from Riverhead to New York. And you  
9 want me to go to a class to be educated about  
10 nitrogen, and I think you're out of your mind.

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: Well, thank you, sir.

12 On that note, that's five minutes.

13 Was there something else you wanted to  
14 add, Mr. Lefstein? Because we've got another  
15 speaker.

16 MR. LEFSTEIN: Oh, yeah. I'm on  
17 Coumadin, which is a blood thinner. That also  
18 kills rats, which is true. But maybe, just maybe  
19 the NPK, because potassium, too much potassium is  
20 not good for your heart, because I have to cut  
21 down on that. Maybe with the potassium that we  
22 put down now, maybe that affects maybe the fruits  
23 that I buy when I'm here in Riverhead, you know,  
24 eating fruit. Maybe there's too much potassium in  
25 it that maybe that's an effect.

1 THE CHAIRPERSON: All in the dosage.

2 Well, thank you very much, Mr. Lefstein.

3 Mr. Lofaro?

4 MR. LOFARO: All I have to say is one  
5 thing, that most of the consumers out there don't  
6 know you need a license to apply pesticides. When  
7 I get new clients, or even when I lose old ones, I  
8 ask, Are you getting a licensed applicator? Well,  
9 I don't know.

10 So the biggest education you can  
11 actually give them is tell them that you need a  
12 licensed applicator to do the work on your lawns  
13 or trees, just like you get a licensed plumber, a  
14 licensed electrician. All right?

15 A lot of people don't know you need a  
16 licensed applicator, and they look for the  
17 cheapest price they can get. So a lot of times  
18 you lose to an unlicensed person, which I wouldn't  
19 know. But that's what happens a lot of times.

20 And that's about the biggest education  
21 you can give to the people is you have to be  
22 licensed to do this on your land. And I don't  
23 know how to get it out there. I know NSLGA. But,  
24 for the most part, people don't know you need a  
25 license.

1 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, sir.

2 MEMBER ANDERS: Can I ask a question?

3 THE CHAIRPERSON: There is a question,  
4 Mr. Lofaro.

5 MEMBER ANDERS: As a homeowner, if I  
6 were to go in the Pennysaver, let's say, and I  
7 take some ads and I call these various people,  
8 when you say applicator and landscaper are you  
9 saying that like you're a man who takes care of  
10 the landscaping who happens to be licensed to  
11 apply whatever is needed for the property? Is  
12 that what you mean by that?

13 MR. LOFARO: When the ad is in the  
14 paper, if they're a licensed applicator it should  
15 have a license number right there. By law, it  
16 should be right there. The Suffolk County  
17 consumer license, your pesticides applicator  
18 license and the New York State license should be  
19 there if they're going to do pesticide  
20 applications on your property.

21 MEMBER ANDERS: But like when you said  
22 if somebody hires Tom Jones to do the property and  
23 all the man does -- I shouldn't say that. But  
24 when he comes, he cuts the lawn, edges the lawn,  
25 et cetera, do you have to be licensed to do that?

1 MR. ALFARO: Yes, I believe you do. I  
2 don't do that, but --

3 MEMBER ANDERS: I didn't know that.

4 MR. ALFARO: A Consumers Affairs license  
5 you need.

6 MEMBER ANDERS: And that I know. But  
7 you don't have to go through training on cutting  
8 lawns?

9 MR. ALFARO: No, no.

10 MEMBER ANDERS: I just was trying to get  
11 it clear. Because I cut my own lawn.

12 MR. ALFARO: Well, you need a license,  
13 then.

14 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

15 Is there anyone else who wishes to  
16 address the committee?

17 If not --

18 Okay, sir, you will get a green card to  
19 fill out. Just say your name and fill it out so  
20 we can have the right --

21 MR. D'ANDREA: Michael D'Andrea.

22 THE CHAIRPERSON: That's D apostrophe  
23 A-N-D-R-E-A?

24 MR. D'ANDREA: Correct.

25 I wasn't going to say anything, but

1 being that he did such on the watering aspect --  
2 I'm a water and irrigation contractor. What I do  
3 is I look at an irrigation system from a  
4 landscaper's point of view, which a lot of  
5 companies don't. A lot of homeowners do their own  
6 irrigation, a lot don't.

7 Just briefly, what I do is set up  
8 different zones, which a couple people touched on,  
9 sunny as opposed to shade, you know, the different  
10 size nozzles or orifices we use, the main sensors.  
11 And some of the higher end clocks, what they do is  
12 they have a seasonal button in there. And what  
13 you can do is set everything for a half-hour zone,  
14 or whatever amount you want. And then if it does  
15 get warmer, all you have to do is push one button  
16 and it'll bring the whole house up a percentage or  
17 down a percentage in the cooler weather. So it's  
18 a lot easier for a lot of homeowners, without  
19 going into the program and screwing that all up,  
20 which a lot of people are afraid to do. But if  
21 they have a better clock, they'll be a little more  
22 inclined to doing that which does conserve water  
23 and water at the proper times.

24 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

25 That was interesting.

1 Anybody have a question for Mr.  
2 D'Andrea?

3 Thank you very much. I didn't know  
4 about that.

5 MR. D'ANDREA: Because a lot of lower  
6 end clocks at Home Depot, they don't have that,  
7 and people put everything on an hour zone every  
8 day. I set up separate zones because they  
9 require, some districts in Nassau County require  
10 that, but not all.

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. And if you  
12 could just let us have the card with your name, it  
13 will be correct in our records.

14 Is there anyone else who would like to  
15 say something, or is everyone getting hungry?

16 MR. LEFSTEIN: I just wanted to add,  
17 about the homeowner when she cuts her lawn, she  
18 can put it into black plastic bags and put it out  
19 on the street, and then the garbage men take it.  
20 When --

21 MS. ANDERS: No, I can't. I live in the  
22 Town of Huntington. We have to mulch.

23 MR. LEFSTEIN: Well, in Nassau, if you  
24 are a homeowner, when you hire me, that grass now  
25 becomes my grass and I have to dispose of it. I

1 have to pay to have it removed out of my truck.

2 It costs me dumping fees.

3 When you hire me, I can't put it into a  
4 black paper bag, black plastic bag and put it on  
5 the corner for the garbage man. When you hire a  
6 professional, we're now taking your grass because  
7 now it becomes my grass.

8 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, sir.

9 Anyone else?

10 We truly appreciate your taking the time  
11 out of your day to join us here this morning.  
12 You've given us a lot of good ideas. Your input's  
13 important to us. And some of you have left us  
14 with contact information. We'll be taking  
15 everything you said as part of our deliberations.  
16 And we appreciate that. Thank you very much.

17 If there is no further comment from the  
18 Task Force, I call the meeting adjourned.

19 (Time noted 12:50 p.m.)

20 --oo00oo--

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CERTIFICATION

I, CONSTANCE MONETT, a shorthand reporter  
and Notary Public in and for the State of New  
York, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing is a true and accurate  
transcript of my stenographic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set  
my hand this 30th day of March 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Constance J. Monett

