

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 173

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 29, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblyman ANDREW ZWICKER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblyman JOHN F. MCKEON

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

SYNOPSIS

Expresses support for Great Healthy Yard Project.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** expressing support for the Great Healthy
2 Yard Project.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, Property owners frequently use chemicals such as
5 pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides to protect and care for their
6 lawns and gardens; and
7 **WHEREAS**, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that
8 homeowners use ten times more chemicals per acre than farmers,
9 which is especially problematic since lawns cover over three times
10 more acreage in the United States than corn; and
11 **WHEREAS**, Chemicals can accumulate and contaminate drinking water
12 by entering groundwater through rainwater runoff that drains into
13 streams or by moving through the soil; and
14 **WHEREAS**, The United States Geological Survey reports that half of
15 the nation's groundwater wells and nearly every stream, lake, and
16 river sampled across the county has tested positive for at least one
17 pesticide; and
18 **WHEREAS**, Exposure to chemicals, even in very small amounts,
19 through airborne exposure, direct contact, or consumption of
20 contaminated drinking water can result in adverse health effects
21 such as infertility, birth defects, liver and kidney damage, cancer, or
22 behavioral difficulties; and
23 **WHEREAS**, The contamination of streams and other bodies of water
24 also contribute to toxic algae blooms, which are harmful, upon
25 contact with the water, to wildlife and humans; and
26 **WHEREAS**, Toxic algae blooms have led to numerous closures of New
27 Jersey's lakes and reservoirs, which are frequently utilized for
28 recreational water activities; these closures have significantly
29 impacted the economies of surrounding areas; and
30 **WHEREAS**, Chemicals also pose a threat to marine and wildlife
31 through the pollution of waters in streams, lakes, and other surface
32 water bodies; and
33 **WHEREAS**, It is important for property owners to understand their role
34 in the contamination of bodies of water through the use of
35 pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides; and
36 **WHEREAS**, The Great Healthy Yard Project, which is endorsed by all
37 12 New Jersey Garden Club members, seeks to educate property
38 owners on the negative impacts of applying chemicals to their
39 lawns and encourage property owners to limit their use of
40 chemicals; and
41 **WHEREAS**, The Great Healthy Yard Project will also help New Jersey
42 meet its environmental goals and objectives by improving the
43 State's water quality; and
44 **WHEREAS**, By supporting the Great Healthy Yard Project, the State of
45 New Jersey encourages residents to reduce their use of pesticides,
46 fertilizers, and herbicides and to be aware of the harmful effects
47 these chemicals have on the environment; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Governor and Legislature of the State of New Jersey express support for the Great Healthy Yard Project.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the Secretary of the Senate to the Great Healthy Yard Project.

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This joint resolution expresses support for the Great Healthy Yard Project.

Property owners frequently use chemicals such as pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides to protect and care for their lawns. These chemicals may enter drinking water supplies through rainwater runoff that drains into streams or by entering groundwater through the soil. Nearly all streams, rivers, and lakes across the country along with more than half of the nation's groundwater wells have tested positive for at least one pesticide.

Exposure to these chemicals can lead to adverse health effects of both humans and wildlife. Humans exposed to chemicals through airborne exposure, direct contact, or consumption of contaminated water can experience dangerous health problems such as cancer, birth defects, infertility, behavioral difficulties, and liver and kidney damage. The health of marine life, along with other animals who rely on the consumption of marine life to survive, is also negatively impacted by the chemical contamination of bodies of water.

These chemicals also contribute to toxic algae blooms, which result in closures of contaminated bodies of water that are typically used for recreational water activities. These closures have negative impacts on the economies of surrounding areas.

In order to combat the dangers of these chemical products, the Great Healthy Yard Project seeks to educate property owners on the importance of limiting chemical use. The Great Healthy Yard Project encourages property owners to pledge to take care of their lawns without synthetic pesticides, weed-killers, and fertilizers, except in on rare occasions to resolve an infestation or to improve habitat for native plants and wildlife, and also for property owners to refrain from disposing pharmaceuticals or chemicals down drains and toilets. By expressing support for the Great Healthy Yard Project, the State of New Jersey encourages its residents to reduce their use of pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides and to be aware of the harmful effects these chemicals have on the environment.