

STATE OF NEW YORK

102

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

(Prefiled)

January 8, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. ROSENTHAL -- read once and referred to the
Committee on Local Governments

AN ACT to amend the public health law, the town law and the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to prohibiting the removal of managed natural landscapes

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Sections 1320 and 1321 of the public health law are renum-
2 bered sections 1321 and 1322 and a new section 1320 is added to read as
3 follows:

4 § 1320. Definitions. 1. For the purposes of this title:

5 (a) "Managed natural landscape" shall mean a planned, intentional, and
6 maintained planting of native or non-native grasses, wildflowers, forbs,
7 ferns, shrubs, or trees, including but not limited to rain gardens,
8 meadow vegetation, and ornamental plants. Managed natural landscapes
9 does not include turf grass lawns left unattended for the purpose of
10 returning to a natural state and any ragweed or other species of weed,
11 plant or growth which is noxious or detrimental to the public health, or
12 the seed, pollen or other emanation therefrom, when carried through the
13 air or otherwise dispersed, is noxious or detrimental to the public
14 health.

15 (b) "Meadow vegetation" shall mean grasses and flowering broad leaf
16 plants that are native to, or adapted to, the state of New York, and
17 that are commonly found in meadow and prairie plant communities, not
18 including noxious weeds.

19 (c) "Ornamental plants" shall mean grasses, perennials, annuals, and
20 groundcovers purposefully planted for aesthetic reasons.

21 (d) "Rain garden" shall mean a lawn comprised mostly of grasses
22 commonly used in regularly cut lawns or play areas, including but not

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 limited to bluegrass, fescue, and ryegrass blends, intended to be main-
2 tained at a height of no more than eight inches.

3 § 2. Section 1321 of the public health law, as renumbered by section
4 one of this act, is amended to read as follows:

5 § 1321. Noxious weeds and growths; declaration of nuisance. 1. When-
6 ever in any health district there shall be growing on any property ther-
7 ein any ragweed or other species of weed, plant or growth which is noxi-
8 ous or detrimental to the public health, or the seed, pollen or other
9 emanation therefrom, when carried through the air or otherwise
10 dispersed, is noxious or detrimental to the public health, the local
11 board of health of any such health district may take and file upon its
12 records what it shall regard as sufficient proof to authorize a declara-
13 tion that the existence of any such growth is a nuisance or danger to
14 the public health, and may thereupon enter the same upon its records as
15 a nuisance and order the same to be removed, destroyed or otherwise
16 abated on any property wherever found.

17 2. The local board of health may also take and file among its records
18 what it shall regard as sufficient proof to authorize a declaration that
19 at any season or period of the year there exists a particular and immi-
20 nent danger to the public health by reason of the approaching period of
21 pollination of any such growth and may enter such determination upon its
22 record.

23 3. A managed natural landscape on private property where such managed
24 natural landscape plants and grasses in excess of eight inches in height
25 have gone to seed and maintained within the bounds of such private prop-
26 erty shall not be declared a nuisance.

27 § 3. Subdivision 4 of section 1322 of the public health law, as renun-
28 bered by section one of this act, is amended to read as follows:

29 4. The provisions of this section and of section thirteen hundred
30 [~~twenty~~] twenty-one of this [~~chapter~~] title shall not operate to deprive
31 the local legislative body of any municipality or county of the power to
32 enact local laws in relation to any matter in respect to which such
33 power would otherwise exist, nor shall it limit such power. If this
34 power otherwise exists, any provision of this section and of section
35 thirteen hundred [~~twenty~~] twenty-one of this [~~chapter~~] title may be
36 superseded, supplemented or amended by local law in the same manner and
37 to the same extent as such provisions could be superseded, supplemented
38 or amended had this section and section thirteen hundred [~~twenty~~] twen-
39 ty-one of this [~~chapter~~] title not been enacted.

40 § 4. Subdivision 5-a of section 64 of the town law, as amended by
41 chapter 230 of the laws of 1963, is amended to read as follows:

42 5-a. Removal of fire and health hazards and weeds. The town board may
43 require the owners of land to cut, trim or remove from the land owned by
44 them brush, grass, rubbish, or weeds, or to spray poisonous shrubs or
45 weeds on such land, and upon default may cause such grass, brush,
46 rubbish or weeds to be cut, trimmed or removed and such poisonous shrubs
47 or weeds to be sprayed by the town and the total expense of such
48 cutting, trimming, removal or spraying may be assessed by the town board
49 on the real property on which such brush, grass, rubbish, weeds or
50 poisonous shrubs or weeds were found, and the expense so assessed shall
51 constitute a lien and charge on the real property on which it is levied
52 until paid or otherwise satisfied or discharged and shall be collected
53 in the same manner and at the same time as other town charges. If the
54 owner of said lands is a non-resident, a notice to so cut, trim or
55 remove such brush, grass, rubbish or weeds or to spray such poisonous
56 shrubs or weeds mailed to such owner addressed to [~~his~~] the owner's last

1 known address shall be sufficient service thereof. The provisions of
 2 this subdivision shall not apply within the property lines of any lands
 3 or highway easements owned by another municipal corporation or political
 4 subdivision of the state or to a private property owner maintaining a
 5 managed natural landscape consistent with subdivision three of section
 6 thirteen hundred twenty-one of the public health law.

7 § 5. Section 17-145 of the administrative code of the city of New York
 8 is amended to read as follows:

9 § 17-145 Dangerous buildings, places and things; declaration as
 10 nuisance. a. Whenever any building, erection, excavation, premises,
 11 business pursuit, matter or thing, or the sewerage, drainage or venti-
 12 lation thereof, in the city, in the opinion of the board, whether as a
 13 whole or in any particular, shall be in a condition or in effect danger-
 14 ous to life or health, and whenever there shall be growing on any prop-
 15 erty any ragweed or other species of weed, plant or growth which is
 16 noxious or detrimental to the public health, or the seed, pollen or
 17 other emanation whereof, when carried through the air or otherwise
 18 dispersed, is noxious or detrimental to the public health, the board may
 19 take and file among its records what it shall regard as sufficient proof
 20 to authorize its declaration that the same, to the extent it may speci-
 21 fy, is a public nuisance, or dangerous to life or health; and may there-
 22 upon enter the same in its records as a nuisance, and order the same to
 23 be removed, abated, suspended, altered, or otherwise improved or puri-
 24 fied, as such order shall specify. The borough presidents and the
 25 commissioner of transportation are authorized to furnish the department
 26 with information in writing as to properties and locations where such
 27 noxious weeds and growths may be found.

28 b. The provisions of this section shall not apply if such private
 29 property owner is maintaining a managed natural landscape that is
 30 consistent with subdivision three of section thirteen hundred twenty-one
 31 of the public health law.

32 § 6. This act shall take effect immediately.