

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 3954
(First Reprint)

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 3954 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

This bill would direct the Drinking Water Quality Institute, an advisory board within the Department of Environmental Protection, to recommend maximum contaminant level standards in drinking water for the chemical trichloropropane. The Department would then be required to promulgate regulations to adopt that recommendation.

While I share the sponsors' concerns regarding the presence of chemicals in our drinking water, I believe that this bill threatens to undermine the current system of protection that we have in place. The Department of Environmental Protection is charged as the steward of the environment within the State, and it receives recommendations from the Drinking Water Quality Institute on the presence of chemicals in our drinking water. However, this bill would elevate the Institute's role from an advisory board to one with binding authority. It is inappropriate to change our system of drinking water protection with regard to the consideration of one chemical, and to remove the Department's independent review of the Institute's recommendations.

As such, I am recommending that this bill be amended to authorize the Institute to study the issue of trichloropropane in drinking water and make a maximum contaminant level recommendation to the Department, a recommendation that the Department can accept or reject. I am confident that the Department will continue to exercise its authority in this regard in a responsible and appropriate manner.

Accordingly, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 3954
(First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

Page 2, Section 1, Line 9: Delete "shall" and insert
"may"

Page 2, Section 1, Lines 10-11: Delete ", within 90 days
after the date of enactment
of this act," and insert
"may"

Page 2, Section 1, Line 15: Delete "shall" and insert
"may"

Page 2, Section 1, Line 20: Delete "The department shall
adopt the maximum
contaminant"

Page 2, Section 1, Lines 21-22: Delete in their entirety

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Thomas P. Scrivo

Chief Counsel to the Governor