

ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
ASSEMBLY, No. 163

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 19, 1996

The Assembly Environment, Science and Technology Committee reports favorably an Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill No. 163.

This committee substitute would provide for the authorization of \$70 million in State general obligation bonds to be used for various infrastructure capital projects and studies in the Pinelands.

Of the \$70 million authorization, a sum not to exceed \$5 million may be used by the Pinelands Commission to prepare an infrastructure plan and an aquifer assessment. The infrastructure plan is necessary to determine which projects are needed. The aquifer assessment will allow the Pinelands Commission to determine the impacts of withdrawals and development on the aquifer and thus on the Pinelands ecosystem. A sum not to exceed \$10 million may be used for grants or loans to local government units for infrastructure capital projects designed to eliminate wastewater discharges from leaving the Pinelands. Currently, millions of gallons per day of Pinelands water leaves the system by way of discharges into the Delaware River and Atlantic Ocean. These withdrawals may add to the depletion of the aquifer. Also, a sum not to exceed \$5 million may be used for grants or loans for small scale infrastructure capital projects designed to service existing public schools, or expansions thereof, which are located outside regional growth areas and town management areas.

The remaining sum of at least \$50 million is to be used for grants or loans to counties, municipalities, or other local authorities or agencies for infrastructure capital projects necessary to protect water resources while accommodating development in regional growth areas and town management areas in the Pinelands. Grants or loans may be provided to local government units in areas other than regional growth areas, if the project would serve a town management area, provided the municipality provides for accommodation of Pinelands development credits in a manner consistent with the comprehensive management plan for the Pinelands.

The committee substitute provides that infrastructure capital

projects otherwise eligible for funding pursuant to the bill that were commenced, or for which documented costs had been incurred, by local government units within four years prior to the approval of the bill by the people would be eligible to receive grants or loans retroactively.

No project would be approved unless the municipality's master plan and zoning ordinances, and the county's master plan, conform to the comprehensive management plan and the project is on the infrastructure plan.

The committee substitute also requires that the Pinelands Commission adopt regulations permitting municipalities to designate receiving areas for Pinelands development credits in town management areas.

The committee substitute creates the "Pinelands Water Resources Protection Trust Fund" into which the bond proceeds will be deposited and provides that moneys from the fund are conditioned on a project specific appropriation by the Legislature. The Commissioner of Environmental Protection is to submit with the annual budget request a plan for the expenditure of moneys from the bond fund.