

SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 665

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 11, 1997

The Senate Community Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly, No. 665 (1R) with committee amendments.

This bill, as amended, would create the "Rahway River Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee," which would be composed of: (1) a representative of each river municipality, who shall be selected by the governing body of that municipality and who shall be a voting member of the committee; (2) a representative of Union county, who shall be selected by the governing body of that county and who shall be a voting member of the committee; (3) a representative of Middlesex County, who shall be selected by the governing body of that county and who shall be a voting member of the committee; (4) a representative of Essex county, who shall be selected, and may be removed, by the county executive of that county and who shall be a voting member of the committee; and (5) the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, or a designee thereof, who shall serve ex officio and who shall be a nonvoting member of the committee.

Any municipality in Union county or Essex county that is not a river municipality may, through its governing body, request membership, with full voting privileges, on the committee. Such membership would be granted upon a majority vote of the voting membership of the committee.

"River municipalities" is defined in this bill to mean the Union county municipalities of Clark, Cranford, Garwood, Kenilworth, Linden, Mountainside, Rahway, Scotch Plains, Springfield, Summit, Union, Westfield, and Winfield, the Middlesex county municipalities of Carteret, Edison, and Woodbridge, the Essex county municipalities of Maplewood, Millburn, Orange, South Orange, and West Orange, and any other Union, Middlesex, or Essex county municipality that chooses to participate, and is accepted, as a member of the committee as provided in section 4 of the bill.

In order to facilitate achievement of the State goal, as set forth in this bill, fully to restore, promote, preserve, and maintain the

environmental health and water quality of the Rahway river system, the committee would be required to:

(1) develop recommended regional planning strategies and other regional policies, procedures, and model ordinances and resolutions, which would be implemented by each member municipality and county on a voluntary basis;

(2) where appropriate, coordinate efforts of member municipalities and counties to clean up the Rahway river system or any tributary or watershed land thereof and to alleviate flooding conditions in that river system;

(3) recommend appropriate State legislation and administrative action; and

(4) advocate, and where appropriate, act as a coordinating, distributing, or recipient agency for, federal and State funding of environmental protection projects in river municipalities and river counties, which projects may include the work of the committee.

This bill provides that the committee would dissolve in ten years unless the committee on an annual basis decides by unanimous vote to continue.

Under the bill, the Department of Environmental Protection would provide technical and planning assistance to the Rahway River Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee.

The committee amended the bill to add a representative from Middlesex county to the river committee; to add the Middlesex county municipalities of Carteret, Edison, and Woodbridge, and the Union county municipalities of Linden and Scotch Plains to the bill's definition of "river municipalities"; and to establish as a goal, where appropriate, the alleviating of flooding conditions in that river system. The committee also amended the bill to remove the word "upper" from the name of the river committee to reflect more accurately the scope of the bill.