

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 2666
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 31, 1997

Assembly Bill No. 2666 of 1997 establishes within the Division of Science and Research in the Department of Environmental Protection the Metedeconk Creek and Toms River Basin Study Group to study the ecology of the Metedeconk Creek and Toms River basins, including the aquifers beneath them, and to make recommendations to address the problems identified. The study group would be composed of nine DEP staff persons named by the director of the division, each with a specified expertise pertinent to the bill's mission. The bill includes an appropriation of \$250,000 to carry out the purposes of this act.

The bill authorizes the study group to use the services of employees of other public agencies and to employ or contract with consultants that may be required in the judgment of the executive director. Upon completion of the study, the study group is directed to prepare a report containing its findings and recommendations and transmit it to the Legislature within one year of the effective date of this act.

The Office of Legislative Services cannot estimate whether the bill's appropriation level will be sufficient to finance the desired study because of the many scientific variables inherent in carrying out this type of research. Since the extent, type, and location of potential pollutants and the assessed risk of each pollutant are not fully known at this time, the effort and money needed to conduct the proper investigation and research on these factors will not be fully known until well into the study. Conversely, if the study group is able to enlist a high level of participation from other public agencies, and if a large and reliable database exists on these topics, then the costs of the study may be somewhat minimized. In either case, the study's parameters and work plan will probably be designed to address the bill's objectives within its budgetary limits.

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.