

ASSEMBLY LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2934

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 16, 1997

The Assembly Local Government Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2934.

Assembly Bill No. 2934 appropriates \$95,000 to the Department of Health and Senior Services for a grant to a joint Avon-Neptune emergency response program intended to better protect the public when using Monmouth County shore waters. It follows the scaling back of the Shark River station of the United States Coast Guard due to a redistribution of federal resources and personnel.

These municipalities are developing an inter-municipal rapid response team of approximately 60 members, which includes lifeguards, divers, boat rescue personnel, emergency medical service workers, police officers, fire fighters, security personnel, traffic command staff, critical incident personnel, stress management personnel and other volunteers, all of whom work together to provide a rapid, organized response to water-related emergencies. This team effort is eliminating the duplication of services, the barriers caused by territorial boundaries and the delays caused by an ineffective initial response.

While the team is now geared to respond to emergencies on the waterfront in the Avon-Neptune region and on the Shark River and its inlet, the team's responsibilities may be expanded to include the waters of Bradley Beach, Asbury Park and Belmar. Emergency workers from this budding rescue team were honored in 1996 with the first Community Volunteerism Award from the Governor's Office on Volunteerism and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.