

## **SENATE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT TO**

**SENATE, No. 1790**

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: FEBRUARY 10, 1997

The Senate Environment Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1790.

This bill would establish 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 and to make recommendations to address the problems identified. The study group would be composed of nine staff persons, to be named by the director of the division, each with expertise in at least one of the following areas: water supply management, water quality monitoring, watershed management, nonpoint source pollution, pollution prevention, and risk assessment. Staff persons may be selected from any division or office within the department.

The study group would be required to study the ecology of these river basins and the aquifers located beneath these basins, and shall include, but need not be limited to, as assessment of: the quality of the water supply, including the aquifers located beneath the basins; the type and quantity of pollutants and hazardous substances identified in both the surface waters and aquifers; the sources, or suspected sources, of the pollutants and hazardous substances identified; and the risks to human and animal health of the pollutants and hazardous substances identified.

The bill authorizes the study group to call to its assistance the services of employees of any federal, State, county or municipal department, board, commission or agency. The study group may also employ or contract with consulting engineers, biologists, chemists, epidemiologists, and any other consultants that may be required in the judgment of the executive director of the study group to carry out the purposes of the study group. The bill appropriates \$250,000 to the department to support the costs of the study group, including any costs associated with hiring outside consultants.

Upon completion of the study, the study group would make final recommendations for action to address the problems identified in its findings. A report containing the findings and recommendations would be transmitted to the Legislature within one year of the effective date of this act. The study group would expire upon transmission of its report to the Legislature.