

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1790

with Senate committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 10, 1997

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1790 of 1997 with amendments.

Senate Bill No. 1790, as amended, establishes the Metedeconk Creek and Toms River Watershed Management Study Group within the Department of Environmental Protection. The group will study the Metedeconk Creek and Toms River watershed management areas and make recommendations to address the problems identified.

The group will study these watershed management areas and the aquifers located beneath these areas, and assess the quality of the water supply, 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 employ or contract with consulting engineers, biologists, chemists, epidemiologists, and any other consultants that may be required in the judgment of the department to carry out the purposes of the study.

Upon completion of the study, the group will make final recommendations for action to address the problems identified in its findings. A report containing the findings and recommendations is to be transmitted to the Legislature within three years following enactment.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amended the bill with the approval of the sponsor to:

- * delete the specifications for the location of the study group within a certain division of the department and for the composition of the membership of the group.
- * change the use of "basin" to "watershed management areas."
- * permit the department to designate the boundaries of the watershed management area to be studied.
- * require the study group to coordinate its activities with those of the department and the Department of Health and Senior Services.

* permit the study to be completed within three years rather than one year.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates \$250,000 to the Department of Environmental Protection for the costs of the Metedeconk Creek and Toms River Watershed Management Study Group established by this bill.