

SENATE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2138

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 5, 1997

The Senate Environment Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 2138.

This bill would appropriate \$57,088,000 from various Green Acres bond acts to the Department of Environmental Protection to provide low-interest loans or grants, or both, to assist local government units in the State to acquire and develop lands for recreation and conservation purposes. The sum appropriated would include administrative costs. The projects for which the appropriation is being made are listed in this bill and two other Green Acres bills that are part of a four-bill legislative package concerning the Green Acres and Blue Acres programs.

This bill would further authorize the Department of Environmental Protection to use unexpended balances of amounts previously appropriated for local government unit projects pursuant to the 1983, 1987, 1989, 1992, and 1995 Green Acres bond acts for the purpose of making low-interest loans or grants, or both, to local government units for projects listed in this bill and in the three other Green Acres or Blue Acres "local government" bills of this legislative package, as well as for local government unit projects previously approved for funding pursuant to various acts implementing the 1983, 1987, 1989, 1992, and 1995 Green Acres bond acts, to the extent such funds are available as a result of project withdrawals or cost savings. Under the bill, the department may also use interest earnings and loan repayments from the 1983, 1987, 1989, 1992, and 1995 Green Acres bond acts that become available on or before June 30, 1998 for that purpose.

This bill would also specifically approve the funding of eligible projects of certain local government units located in southern New Jersey. The total sum of the approved amounts for the southern New Jersey projects is \$7,648,000, which includes administrative costs. To the extent that there are funds remaining after those local government unit projects in southern New Jersey listed in this bill are offered funding, the bill also authorizes the department, with the approval of the Joint Budget Oversight Committee, to use those funds for local government unit projects listed in the three other Green Acres or Blue Acres "local government" bills of this legislative package as well as for local government unit projects previously approved for funding pursuant to various acts implementing the 1983, 1987, 1989, 1992, and 1995 Green Acres bond acts.

This bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 2991.