

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3618

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 11, 2021

The Senate Environment and Energy Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 3618.

The bill would make a one-time supplemental appropriation of \$10 million for Fiscal Year 2021 to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) from the General Fund. The bill would direct the DEP to establish a program to use these funds for grants to assist qualified entities to pay certain costs associated with the management and maintenance of lakes for recreation and conservation purposes. In establishing the program required pursuant to the bill, the DEP would be required to develop criteria for the evaluation and ranking of applications to provide priority to projects located in the Highlands Region and pinelands area and to improve water quality and increase recreational access and use of lakes, including projects to control nutrient levels in lakes in order to prevent future harmful algal blooms.

The bill provides priority for funding for projects located in the Highlands Region. The bill provides that a grant issued pursuant to the bill may be used for stormwater and nonpoint source pollution management activities, if the DEP determines that those activities would directly enhance, improve, or protect the use of a lake for recreation and conservation purposes.

The Greenwood Lake Commission, the Lake Hopatcong Commission, and local government units may apply for grants pursuant to the bill. The DEP would be required to approve any application submitted by the Greenwood Lake Commission and the Lake Hopatcong Commission, and each commission would receive a minimum grant award of \$750,000.