

ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT AND SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO ASSEMBLY, No. 4865

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 8, 2022

The Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4865.

This bill, as amended, requires the Department of Community Affairs (“DCA”), in consultation with other State agencies and authorities as necessary, to track natural disaster-related spending by counties, municipalities, local authorities, fire districts, school districts, and by the State. The bill requires DCA to provide a plain-language summary of the natural disaster-related spending on the State’s Internet website, and update the summary on an annual basis.

The bill requires the natural disaster spending summary to provide the public with information on the natural disaster-related spending of the State, and of its various units of local government. The bill directs DCA to organize natural disaster-related spending into the following categories, and expand or refine each category as deemed appropriate:

- (1) Preparedness spending, consisting of measures intended to enhance the ability to mitigate against, respond to, and recover from a disaster, including pre-event contracting, public awareness or outreach campaigns, training, warning system installation, response and recovery planning, vital food and medical supply maintenance, emergency operation center management, and emergency personnel on mobilization;
- (2) Mitigation spending, consisting of measures to reduce or eliminate the potential harmful consequences of disasters, including retrofitting buildings and infrastructure, buying out vulnerable property, establishing hazard-mitigation plans, building tornado safe rooms, implementing building safety codes, and any measure consistent with eligibility for funding consideration from the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program;
- (3) Response spending following the declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor or the proclamation of a state of local disaster emergency within a municipality by a municipal emergency management coordinator, consisting of actions that address the immediate, direct results of a natural disaster,

including the provision of search and rescue operations, emergency shelter and food provision, medical care, management of damaged utilities, the patrolling of looting-prone areas, and damage assessment; and

- (4) Recovery spending, consisting of short- and long-term activities designed to restore communities to normal or better conditions, including returning utility systems to operational standards; managing debris; reconstructing public infrastructure; providing redevelopment grants, loans, and legal assistance; and rebuilding communities.

Within each category of spending, the bill directs the natural disaster spending summary to report where the funding originated for the various expenditures, and whether a reimbursement is anticipated. If spending originated with a different unit of government, such as the State or federal government, then the plain-language summary is required to indicate which unit was the source.

Finally, in order to facilitate the reporting of expenditures from the various entities of local government, the bill directs DCA to require local government units, including school districts, to summarize their natural disaster-related spending as a part of user-friendly budget reporting, which is already provided annually.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments to the bill require the DCA to provide a summary of natural disaster-related response spending only following the declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor or the proclamation of a state of local disaster emergency within a municipality by a municipal emergency management coordinator.