

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3207

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 7, 2019

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3207.

Senate Bill No. 3207 establishes new timeframes for the implementation of certain requirements in the “Global Warming Response Act” (GWRA), and requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to adopt a strategy to reduce short-lived climate pollutants.

The Legislature enacted the GWRA in 2007 in order to help curb global climate change by establishing goals to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in the State: to 1990 emissions levels by the year 2020, and to 80 percent below 2006 levels by 2050. The GWRA required the DEP to, among other things, adopt rules and regulations establishing a greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reporting program, prepare biennial reports on the status of this program, and make recommendations for legislative and regulatory action necessary to accomplish the 2050 goal for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Despite the directive in the law, however, the DEP did not fulfill the requirements.

This bill establishes new timeframes for the completion of the Legislature’s directives in the GWRA. Specifically, within 18 months after the date of enactment of the bill, the DEP is required to adopt rules and regulations establishing a greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reporting program. Additionally, within 18 months after the date of enactment, and biennially thereafter, the DEP is required to prepare a report on the status of the greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reporting program, the current level of greenhouse gas emissions in the State, and the progress made toward compliance with the goals established in the GWRA. Finally, within one year after the date of enactment, the bill requires the DEP to prepare a report recommending additional measures necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve the 2050 goal.

The bill also requires the State to develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants in the State. Short-lived climate pollutants, such as black carbon, fluorinated gases, and methane, are greenhouse gases that have a relatively short lifespan in the atmosphere, from a few days to a few decades, but that have a warming influence on the climate that is greater than that of carbon dioxide. The requirement to adopt a comprehensive strategy under this bill is based on legislation adopted and implemented in California.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates the bill would result in an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures, since it imposes additional research, planning, and administrative responsibilities on the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The bill requires the DEP to establish a program that monitors and reports annually on Statewide greenhouse gas emissions. The bill also requires the DEP to prepare biennial reports on the status of the program. These requirements would impose additional administrative burdens on the DEP, and may require hiring new staff.

The bill requires the DEP to prepare a report that recommends strategies to meet the 2050 goal for Statewide greenhouse emissions, which was established by the 2007 "Global Warming Response Act." This bill also requires the DEP to develop a strategy to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants. These requirements would also impose additional administrative burdens on the DEP.