

SENATE LABOR COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3258

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 11, 2021

The Senate Labor Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3258.

This bill creates a five-year Water Apprenticeship, Training, and Employment Resources (“WATER”) Pilot Program in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to provide grants to support funding for newly-established adult apprenticeship programs in the water infrastructure, clean energy, and digital utilities sectors, focusing on underserved and underrepresented communities. Any organizational sponsor of an apprenticeship program is eligible to receive the grant, including businesses, labor organizations, colleges, workforce training providers, and non-profit organizations, provided that they have secured an industry partner or a monetary or in-kind funding contribution.

The grant applications shall be accepted starting July 1, 2021, and the grants shall be awarded no later than January 1, 2022. The department shall rank eligible applicants for grants based upon each applicant’s potential to reach a broad audience through its recruitment and outreach efforts, significantly increase enrollment and completion of the apprenticeship program, including among members of underserved and underrepresented communities, and fill existing needs for skilled workers in the market.

Beginning January 1, 2022, and each year thereafter for the duration of the pilot grant program, the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development shall submit to the Governor, and to the Legislature, a report that evaluates the results of the program and its effectiveness in preparing individuals to meet existing and burgeoning workforce needs and addressing gaps in skills in the workforce.

The bill creates the WATER Fund in the Department of the Treasury to solicit, collect, and invest moneys to be used for the purposes of the bill.