

# ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **SENATE, No. 3618**

with committee amendments

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JUNE 18, 2021

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3618, with committee amendments.

This bill, as amended by the committee, makes a one-time supplemental appropriation of \$10 million for Fiscal Year 2022 to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) from the General Fund. The bill directs 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.

The bill requires the DEP to develop criteria for the evaluation and ranking of applications to provide priority to projects submitted by qualified entities responsible for a lake with public access; and projects 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 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 bill defines “qualified entity” to mean: the Greenwood Lake Commission; the Lake Hopatcong Commission; a local government unit; an entity established as a joint meeting pursuant to law or an entity established pursuant to ordinance by the municipalities surrounding a publicly-accessible lake for the management of the lake, including, but not limited to, the Deal Lake Commission or the Lake Topanemus Park Commission; or a nonprofit organization that is exempt from federal taxation pursuant to 26 U.S.C. s.501 (c)(3) and whose mission is the management of a publicly-accessible lake.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 5778 (ACS) as reported by the committee.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments to the bill:

- 1) provide that the appropriation provided by the bill would be a supplement to the Fiscal Year 2022 budget, rather than the Fiscal Year 2021 budget;

2) provide that the funds would be used to provide grants to pay for the management and maintenance of lakes for recreation and conservation purposes, rather than to pay for the cost of development of lands for the aforementioned purpose;

3) delete the provision that would have required the DEP to provide priority to projects located in the Highlands Region and pinelands area, and instead require the DEP to provide priority to projects submitted by qualified entities that are responsible for a lake with public access;

4) delete the provision that would have required the DEP to approve any application submitted by the Greenwood Lake Commission and the Lake Hopatcong Commission and provide a minimum grant amount of \$750,000 to those two commissions; and

5) revise the definition of “qualified entity,” delete the definitions of “Highlands Region” and “pinelands area,” and add a definition for “recreation and conservation purposes.”

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This bill is not certified as requiring a fiscal note.