

SENATE, No. 4181

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 22, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes NJ Water Data Center at public institution of higher education; appropriates \$1 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing the New Jersey Water Data Center,
2 supplementing Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes, and making
3 an appropriation.

4
5 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. a. The New Jersey Water Data Center is hereby established
9 at a public institution of higher education in the State. The purpose
10 of the center shall be to collect, analyze, and publish data on the
11 provision of drinking water and the collection and management of
12 wastewater and stormwater in the State, in order to establish
13 benchmarking data for utilities, provide information on State-wide
14 trends for State regulators and researchers, and promote connections
15 between residents and their water systems. Within 30 days after the
16 effective date of this act, the Governor shall designate the
17 institution of higher education at which the center shall operate.

18 b. The director of the center shall develop, publish, and
19 maintain an Internet website that allows persons to easily access
20 data on drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems. The
21 data shall be updated at least annually and shall include, but not be
22 limited to, the following:

23 (1) performance indicators for each system, including, for
24 drinking water systems, whether each system meets the State's
25 primary and secondary drinking water standards, whether the
26 system has exceeded the federal action level for lead or copper, the
27 estimated number of lead service lines in the system; and the
28 number of lead service lines replaced by each drinking water
29 system;

30 (2) the estimated amount of drinking water lost due to leaks by
31 each drinking water system in the State;

32 (3) budgetary information for each drinking water, wastewater,
33 and stormwater system, including operating expenditures, capital
34 expenditures, operating budget, capital budget, operating ratio, and
35 the percentage of expenditures spent on infrastructure upgrades and
36 maintenance;

37 (4) affordability information for each system, including the
38 average annual cost, per residential household as a percentage of the
39 average income in the service area, for drinking water, sewer, or
40 stormwater management charges, as appropriate;

41 (5) for combined sewer systems, information about combined
42 sewer overflow events in the system, including the number of
43 events and the amount of wastewater and stormwater discharged by
44 combined sewer outfalls in the system; and

45 (6) an assessment of the transparency measures undertaken by
46 each system, including, but not limited to, the posting of rates and
47 the members of the system's governing body on the system's
48 Internet website.

1 c. The director of the center shall convene an advisory council
2 to assist the center in fulfilling its purpose. The council shall be
3 structured and empowered as deemed fit by the director, except that
4 it shall include at least one representative from each of the
5 Department of Environmental Protection, the Board of Public
6 Utilities, and the Department of Community Affairs.

7 d. No later than two years after the effective date of this
8 section, the director shall submit a report to the Legislature,
9 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1),
10 summarizing the center's activities and identifying priorities for the
11 next five years, including any additional resource needs.

12
13 2. There is appropriated \$1 million from the General Fund to
14 the public institution of higher education designated by the
15 Governor pursuant to section 1 of this act, in order to implement the
16 provisions of this act.

17
18 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

19
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21 STATEMENT

22
23 This bill would establish the New Jersey Water Data Center at a
24 public institution of higher education in the State. The purpose of
25 the center would be to collect, analyze, and publish data on the
26 provision of drinking water and the collection and management of
27 wastewater and stormwater in the State, in order to establish
28 benchmarking data for utilities, provide information on State-wide
29 trends for State regulators and researchers, and promote connections
30 between residents and their water systems. The bill would require
31 the Governor, within 30 days after the bill's effective date, to
32 designate the institution of higher education at which the data center
33 will be housed.

34 The bill would require certain basic data to be provided by the
35 center, as enumerated in subsection b. of section 1 of the bill. The
36 bill would also require the director of the center to establish an
37 advisory council to oversee the center's operation, which would be
38 required to include at least one representative from the Department
39 of Environmental Protection, the Department of Community
40 Affairs, and the Board of Public Utilities. The bill would
41 appropriate \$1 million from the General Fund in order to
42 temporarily fund the center.