

ASSEMBLY, No. 2328

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman LISA SWAIN

District 38 (Bergen)

Assemblyman STERLEY S. STANLEY

District 18 (Middlesex)

Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Co-Sponsored by:

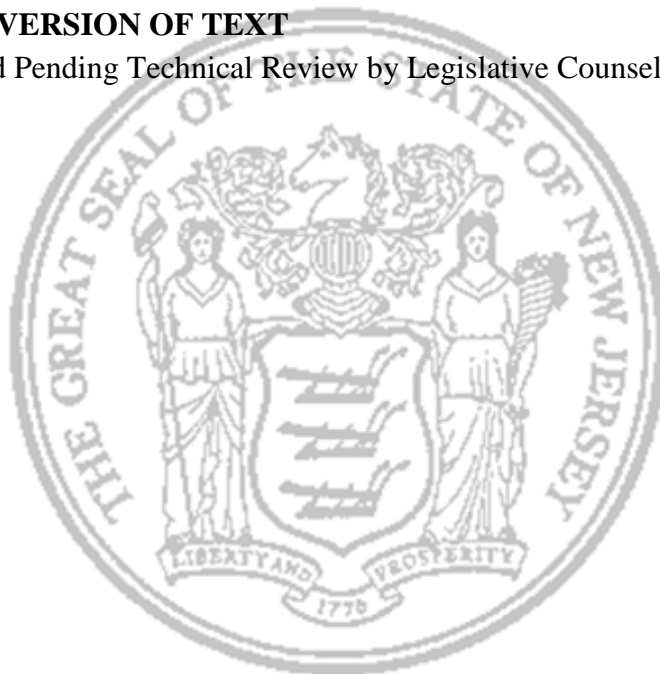
**Assemblymen Karabinchak, Atkins, Assemblywoman Haider,
Assemblymen Sampson, Freiman and Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson**

SYNOPSIS

Requires DCA to track natural disaster-related spending by State and local government.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT requiring the Department of Community Affairs to track
2 natural disaster-related spending, amending P.L.2007, c.53 and
3 P.L.2007, c.63, and supplementing Title 52 of the Revised
4 Statutes.

5

6 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
7 *of New Jersey:*

8

9 1. (New section) The Commissioner of Community Affairs, in
10 consultation with other State agencies and authorities as necessary,
11 shall track natural disaster-related spending by counties,
12 municipalities, local authorities, fire districts, school districts, and
13 by the State. The commissioner shall provide a plain-language
14 summary of the natural disaster-related spending on the State's
15 Internet website, and shall update the summary on an annual basis
16 at minimum.

17 a. The plain-language summary of natural disaster-related
18 spending shall provide the public with information in summary
19 form about the natural disaster-related spending of the State, and of
20 the various units of local government. Within the summary, the
21 commissioner shall organize natural disaster-related spending into
22 the following categories, and may expand or refine each category as
23 the commissioner deems appropriate:

24 (1) preparedness spending, consisting of measures intended to
25 enhance the ability to mitigate against, respond to, and recover from
26 a disaster, including pre-event contracting, public awareness or
27 outreach campaigns, training, warning system installation, response
28 and recovery planning, vital food and medical supply maintenance,
29 emergency operation center management, and emergency personnel
30 mobilization;

31 (2) mitigation spending, consisting of measures to reduce or
32 eliminate the potential harmful consequences of disasters, including
33 retrofitting buildings and infrastructure, buying out vulnerable
34 property, establishing hazard-mitigation plans, building tornado
35 safe rooms, implementing building safety codes, and any measure
36 consistent with eligibility for funding consideration from the federal
37 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program or any successor program;

38 (3) response spending following the declaration of a state of
39 emergency by the Governor or the proclamation of a state of local
40 disaster emergency within a municipality by a municipal emergency
41 management coordinator pursuant to section 22 of P.L.1953, c.438.
42 (C.App.A:9-40.5), consisting of actions that address the immediate,
43 direct results of a natural disaster, including the provision of search
44 and rescue operations, emergency shelter and food provision,

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 medical care, management of damaged utilities, the patrolling of
2 looting-prone areas, and damage assessment; and

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

9 b. Within each category of spending, the plain-language
10 summary of natural disaster-related spending shall report where the
11 funding originated for the various expenditures, and whether a
12 reimbursement is anticipated. If spending originated with a
13 different unit of government, such as the State or federal
14 government, then the plain-language summary shall indicate which
15 unit was the source.

16 c. The commissioner shall require local units, pursuant to
17 section 39 of P.L.2007, c.63 (C.40A:5-48), and school districts,
18 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2007, c.53 (C.18A:22-8a), to
19 summarize their natural disaster-related spending as a part of their
20 user-friendly budget reporting. In accordance with the
21 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
22 seq.), the commissioner shall adopt rules and regulations to
23 facilitate local unit and school district compliance with the user-
24 friendly budget requirements established by this subsection.

25

26 2. Section 2 of P.L.2007, c.53 (C.18A:22-8a) is amended to
27 read as follows:

28 2. a. The Commissioner of Education shall promulgate "user-
29 friendly," plain language budget summary forms for the use of
30 school districts. The commissioner shall also promulgate a
31 procedure for the submission by each school district of the required
32 budget summary form to the Department of Education following the
33 approval of the budget.

34 b. (1) The plain language budget summary shall provide the
35 public with information in summary form about the budget of the
36 school district and shall include, in addition to an abbreviated
37 version of the formal budget adopted by the school district, such
38 statistical information as the commissioner determines to be useful
39 for the public's understanding of the school district's fiscal matters
40 and condition, and shall also include, but not be limited to, the
41 following information for both the district's budget year and the
42 prebudget year: all line items of appropriation aggregated by item
43 type; the school tax rate; the equalized school tax rate; revenues by
44 major category; the amount of available surplus; a description of
45 unusual revenues or appropriations, with a description of the
46 circumstances of the revenues or appropriations; and a list of shared
47 service agreements in which the district is participating.

1 (2) Natural disaster-related appropriations and revenues shall be
2 summarized in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted
3 pursuant to section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
4 Legislature as this bill).

5 c. The plain language budget summary shall be submitted to
6 the Department of Education in such form as determined by the
7 commissioner, and, upon its receipt of the summary, the department
8 shall make the summary available to the public through an Internet
9 website maintained by the department in an easily accessible
10 location. The information on the web site shall be presented as data
11 that can be downloaded by the public for comparative purposes
12 using commonly-used software.
13 (cf: P.L.2007, c.53, s.2)

14
15 3. Section 39 of P.L.2007, c.63 (C.40A:5-48) is amended to
16 read as follows:

17 39. a. The Local Finance Board shall promulgate "user-
18 friendly," plain language budget summary forms for the use of
19 counties, municipalities, local authorities, and fire districts. The
20 board shall also promulgate a procedure for the submission by each
21 of these local government units of the required budget summary
22 form to the Division of Local Government Services in the
23 Department of Community Affairs following the adoption of the
24 annual budget.

25 b. (1) The plain language budget summary shall provide the
26 public with information in summary form about the budget of the
27 local unit and shall include, in addition to an abbreviated version of
28 the formal budget adopted by the local unit, such statistical
29 information as the board determines to be useful for the public's
30 understanding of the local unit's fiscal matters and condition, and
31 shall also include, but shall not be limited to the following
32 information, for both the local unit's current budget year and the
33 previous budget year, as the Local Finance Board determines
34 appropriate to the local unit: all line items of appropriation
35 aggregated by service type; the property tax rate; the property tax
36 collection rate; the assessed value and taxable value of all real
37 property located in the local unit; the amount of bonded
38 indebtedness of the local unit; revenues by major category;
39 description of unusual revenues or appropriations, with a
40 description of the circumstances of the revenues or appropriations;
41 a list of shared service agreements in which the local unit is
42 participating; and the number and amount of outstanding long-term
43 tax exemptions and abatements, and the amount of revenue derived
44 therefrom.

45 (2) Natural disaster-related appropriations and revenues shall be
46 summarized in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted
47 pursuant to section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
48 Legislature as this bill).

1 c. The plain language budget summary shall be submitted to
2 the division in such form as determined by the Local Finance
3 Board, and, upon its receipt of the summary, the division shall make
4 the summary available to the public through an Internet website
5 maintained by the division. The information on the website shall be
6 presented as data that can be downloaded by the public for
7 comparative purposes using commonly-used software.
8 (cf: P.L.2007, c.63, s.39)

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10 4. This act shall take effect immediately.
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13 STATEMENT
14

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

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

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

1 disaster, including the provision of search and rescue
2 operations, emergency shelter and food provision, medical
3 care, management of damaged utilities, the patrolling of
4 looting-prone areas, and damage assessment; and
5 (4) Recovery spending, consisting of short- and long-term
6 activities designed to restore communities to normal or better
7 conditions, including returning utility systems to operational
8 standards; managing debris; reconstructing public
9 infrastructure; providing redevelopment grants, loans, and
10 legal assistance; and rebuilding communities.

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

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