

## Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004  
TRENTON, NJ 08625

### NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor  
Gene Herman 609-777-2600

RELEASE: July 27, 1999

### **Governor Signs Legislation Authorizing \$200 Million for Clean Water Programs**

Gov. Christie Whitman today emphasized her commitment to the environment when she signed three pieces of legislation that will help communities implement clean water programs. The bills authorize \$200 million in environmental infrastructure projects for Fiscal Year 2000.

"These bills will provide the money to implement the 1999 New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Program, which will help local governments around the state provide clean water to their citizens," the Governor said.

"Because of this program, communities statewide will be able to implement programs and projects that will help ensure that clean water fills our streams and lakes, and nothing but pure, sparkling water comes from New Jersey's faucets - and that's something we all can drink to," she said during a visit to the Governor's School on the Environment at Richard Stockton College in Pomona.

"In New Jersey, we have always made protecting the environment a priority," Gov. Whitman said. "In fact, we are now leading the nation in open space preservation, thanks to the Garden State Preservation Act, which I signed last month."

"This landmark legislation will help us preserve one million acres of open space and farmland - about half of the remaining undeveloped land in our state. No other state in the nation has voluntarily made such a tremendous commitment to preserving its landscapes, parks, and farms," she said.

"Protecting the quality of our water is just as important. Our aggressive efforts in this area have produced some very positive results. We have made tremendous progress in cleaning up and protecting our environment, but, as always, there is more to be done," Gov. Whitman said.

As a result of the state's efforts, the Governor said, stringent testing regulations have helped New Jersey boast of some of the cleanest beaches and offshore waters in the nation, while ocean water quality has been declining in other states.

She said the number of beach closings has dropped from more than 800 in 1988 to just three in 1998. There have been no closings this year.

Also, the governor said, continued improvement in coastal water quality has allowed the state to make 21,000 more acres of waters available for shellfish harvesting since 1994 and the number of water systems reporting contaminants has declined over the past decade.

The bills the Governor signed were:

**A-18**, sponsored by Assembly Members John V. Kelly (R-Bergen/Essex/Passaic) and Joseph V. Doria, Jr. (D-Hudson), and Senators Norman M. Robertson (R-Essex/Passaic) and Walter J. Kavanaugh (R-Morris/Somerset), which authorizes the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust to provide loans with an interest rate at or below the prevailing market rate to project sponsors (primarily local governments or public utilities) for a portion of the costs of eligible environmental infrastructure projects.

**A-19**, sponsored by Assembly Members Peter J. Biondi (R-Morris/Somerset) and Nicholas Asselta (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland) and Senators Martha W. Bark (R-Atlantic/Burlington/Camden) and Diane B. Allen (R-Burlington/Camden), which appropriates funds to the Department of Environmental Protection to make zero interest loans to local governments and privately-owned water companies for environmental infrastructure projects.

**A-20**, Sponsored by Assembly Members John C. Gibson (R-CapeMay/Atlantic/Cumberland) and John E. Rooney (R-Bergen) and Senators Henry P. McNamara (R-Bergen/Passaic) and Diane B. Allen (R-Burlington/Camden), which authorizes the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust to finance certain clean water and drinking water projects.

Together, these three bills authorize the 1999 New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program to finance \$200 million in environmental infrastructure projects for state Fiscal Year 2000.

