

Office of the Governor

NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE: August 11, 1998

GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION FOR WATER QUALITY STUDY IN TOMS RIVER AREA

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed legislation appropriating \$100,000 for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to study water quality in the Metedeconk and Toms River basins. The study will help determine if there is a connection between water quality and the number of cancer cases diagnosed in children in the Toms River area.

"This study will be in addition to the current studies being done by the DEP and the Department of Health and Senior Services, and will focus directly on surface and ground water quality in the Toms River area," the Governor said. "We are determined to take every step necessary to find out if the cause of the childhood cancer cases can be pinpointed."

The water study project will be an element of the Barnegat Bay Estuary Program, which is focusing on water quality programs in the bay. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has provided approximately \$400,000 for the Barnegat Bay Estuary Program, which includes a study of the Metedeconk and Toms River areas.

All DEP project activities will be coordinated with the Barnegat Bay Estuary Program and the Department of Health and Senior Services.

The bill requires the project to make findings and issue final recommendations to the Legislature within three years and will be funded with a \$100,000 appropriation.

The bill was sponsored by Assembly Members James W. Holzapfel (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and David W. Wolfe (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and Senators Andrew R. Ciesla (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and Robert W. Singer (R-Burlington/Monmouth/Ocean).