

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3282

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 9, 2023

The Senate Environment and Energy Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 3282.

This bill would require the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to commence, within 30 days after the bill's effective date, and to complete, within six months after the bill's effective date, a comprehensive, collaborative study evaluating the feasibility and benefits of using filtering systems and technologies to remove microplastics from drinking water and wastewater in the State. In conducting the study, the DEP and BPU would be required to: (1) evaluate various factors related to the use, benefits, costs, and efficacy of filtering systems and technologies; and (2) authorize the owners or operators of water systems and wastewater systems in the State to engage in pilot microplastics filtering projects, with pilot project data to be incorporated into the study and associated study report.

Not more than three months after the study is completed, the DEP commissioner and BPU President would be required to cooperatively prepare and submit a written report, to the Governor and the Legislature, identifying the findings from the study, including any findings and relevant data associated with pilot projects undertaken pursuant to the bill, and providing recommendations for legislative, executive, and other actions that can be taken to facilitate, encourage, and promote the increased use of microplastics filtering systems and technologies in the State. At a minimum, the report would be required to: (1) include a strategic plan for the deployment and use of microplastics filtering systems and technologies by system owners or operators in the State; (2) identify the procedures and standards that will be used in soliciting and approving proposals for microplastics filtering projects in the State; and (3) describe the financial incentives, if any, and any other alternative means and methods, that should or will be used by the DEP and BPU to facilitate the development and deployment of efficient and effective microplastics filtering systems and technologies throughout the State, in accordance with the strategic plan, and to promote technological innovations in the area of microplastics water filtering.

Following the submission of the microplastics filtering report, the DEP and BPU would be required to engage in an ongoing, cooperative public education and awareness campaign, consistent with the findings

in the report, and take other appropriate action to inform system owners or operators and members of the public about the threats to human health and the environment that are posed by microplastics, as well as the importance of filtering microplastics from drinking water and wastewater, the filtering systems and technologies that are available on the market and have been deemed to be effective in removing microplastics from water, the goals and primary elements of the strategic plan established pursuant to the bill, and the State and federal incentives that are available, if any, to facilitate the deployment and use of new or existing microplastics filtering systems and technologies in the State. The DEP and BPU would also be required to authorize, and issue permits or licenses as may be necessary to enable, the continuation of pilot projects commenced under the bill, as well as the commencement of new microplastics filtering projects by system owners or operators in the State. Finally, the DEP and BPU would be required, consistent with the recommendations contained in the report, and within the limits of funds appropriated to each agency for its purposes, to establish incentive or other programs, as necessary to incentivize, promote, or facilitate the increased use of effective and efficient new and existing microplastics filtering systems and technologies in the State.