

ASSEMBLY, No. 4822

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 24, 2022

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman ROBERT J. KARABINCHAK

District 18 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblywoman SHAMA A. HAIDER

District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Carter

SYNOPSIS

Directs DEP to establish rebate program for purchase of microfiber washing machine filter or replacement filter; appropriates \$2.5 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/23/2023)

1 AN ACT concerning microfiber washing machine filters,
2 supplementing Title 13 of the Revised Statutes, and making an
3 appropriation.

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

7
8 1. a. No later than one year after the effective date of this
9 section, the Department of Environmental Protection shall establish
10 and implement a program to provide rebates to residents of the State
11 for the purchase of a microfiber washing machine filter or a
12 replacement microfiber washing machine filter. The purpose of the
13 rebate program shall be to encourage the purchase of microfiber
14 washing machine filters and replacement filters and reduce the
15 amount of microfiber pollution in the State.

16 b. The department shall issue a one-time rebate to any resident
17 of the State who purchases an eligible microfiber washing machine
18 filter or replacement filter, as determined by the department,
19 submits a complete application for the rebate, in a manner and form
20 determined by the department, and meets the requirements set forth
21 in this section and in any rules or regulations adopted pursuant
22 thereto by the department pursuant to subsection f. of this section.

23 c. The amount of the rebate shall not exceed the lesser of:

24 (1) the cost of the microfiber washing machine filter or
25 replacement filter; or

26 (2) \$100.

27 d. The department shall determine the types or brands of
28 microfiber washing machine filters and replacement filters that are
29 eligible for the rebate provided pursuant to this section and the
30 manner and form for residents to apply for and, if eligible, receive a
31 rebate pursuant to this section.

32 e. The department shall advertise the availability of rebates
33 pursuant to this section on its Internet website and update the
34 information as necessary.

35 f. The department shall adopt, pursuant to the "Administrative
36 Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), such rules
37 and regulations as may be necessary for the implementation of the
38 rebate program established pursuant to this section.

39 g. No later than two years after the effective date of this act, and
40 annually thereafter, the department shall prepare and submit to the
41 Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-
42 19.1), to the Legislature, a report that includes, at a minimum:

43 (1) a summary of the effectiveness of the rebate program in
44 encouraging the purchase of microfiber washing machine filters and
45 replacement filters and minimizing microfiber pollution in the
46 State;

47 (2) the total number of rebates provided during the year;

1 (3) the total amount of money spent on the provision of rebates
2 during the year;

3 (4) the amount of funding still available for the provision of
4 rebates in future years;

5 (5) recommendations to improve the rebate program's
6 effectiveness; and

7 (6) recommendations concerning whether or not additional
8 funding is needed to continue the rebate program.

9 h. As used in this section:

10 "Department" means the Department of Environmental
11 Protection.

12 "Microfiber washing machine filter" means a device that attaches
13 to a washing machine and is used to filter microfibers from the
14 washing machine wastewater before the microfibers are released
15 into a septic system or public sewage system.

16
17 2. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
18 Department of Environmental Protection the sum of \$2.5 million for
19 the purposes of providing rebates pursuant to the program
20 established in section 1 of this act.

21
22 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

23

24

25 STATEMENT

26

27 This bill would require, no later than one year after the bill's
28 effective date, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
29 to establish and implement a program to provide rebates to State
30 residents for the purchase of a microfiber washing machine filter or
31 a replacement microfiber washing machine filter. The purpose of
32 the rebate program would be to encourage the purchase of
33 microfiber washing machine filters and replacement filters and
34 reduce the amount of microfiber pollution in the State. As defined
35 in the bill, "microfiber washing machine filter" means a device that
36 attaches to a washing machine and is used to filter microfibers from
37 the washing machine wastewater before the microfibers are released
38 into a septic system or public sewage system.

39 Under the bill, one-time rebates would be available to any
40 resident of the State who purchases an eligible microfiber washing
41 machine filter or replacement filter, as determined by the DEP,
42 submits a complete application for the rebate, in a manner and form
43 determined by the DEP, and meets the bill's requirements. The
44 amount of the rebate would not exceed the lesser of: (1) the cost of
45 the microfiber washing machine filter or replacement filter; or (2)
46 \$100.

47 The DEP would be required to determine the types or brands of
48 microfiber washing machine filters and replacement filters that are

1 eligible for the rebate, determine the manner and form for residents
2 to apply for and, if eligible, receive a rebate, and adopt rules and
3 regulations as necessary to implement the rebate program
4 established by the bill. The DEP would be required to advertise the
5 availability of the rebates offered pursuant to the bill on their
6 Internet website. The bill would also require, no later than two
7 years after the bill's effective date, and annually thereafter, the DEP
8 to prepare and submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature
9 that includes, at a minimum: (1) a summary of the effectiveness of
10 the rebate program in encouraging the purchase of microfiber
11 washing machine filters and replacement filters and minimizing
12 microfiber pollution in the State; (2) the total number of rebates
13 provided during the year; (3) the total amount of money spent on
14 the provision of rebates during the year; (4) the amount of funding
15 still available for the provision of rebates in future years; (5)
16 recommendations to improve the rebate program's effectiveness;
17 and (6) recommendations concerning whether or not additional
18 funding is needed to continue the rebate program.

19 Finally, the bill would appropriate \$2.5 million from the General
20 Fund to the DEP for the purposes of providing rebates pursuant to
21 the rebate program established by the bill.

22 According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency
23 (EPA), it is estimated that more than eight million tons of plastic
24 enter our oceans every year. A leading source of this pollution is
25 clothing and textiles. The majority of clothing is made from
26 plastic-based materials such as polyester, rayon, nylon, and acrylic.
27 When washed in a washing machine, synthetic clothing sheds tiny
28 plastic fragments known as microfibers, which eventually end up
29 contaminating shorelines and waterways. Microfibers are the most
30 prevalent type of microplastic (plastic pieces less than 5 mm in
31 diameter) found in the environment. Microfibers have been found
32 in a variety of aquatic life, including fish and shellfish, and humans
33 are exposed to microplastics through the consumption of food and
34 water containing microplastics.

35 The EPA recommends the installation of a microfiber washing
36 machine filter to reduce the amount of microfibers that flow from
37 washing machines to waterways. Certain microfiber washing
38 machine filter manufacturers report that their product is able to
39 prevent the release of up to 90 percent of microfibers that would
40 otherwise be released during the process of doing laundry. It is
41 crucial to take steps to minimize microfiber pollution in the State,
42 and this bill will help to encourage the purchase of a product that
43 can limit the amount of microfibers that enter the State's waters.