

SENATE, No. 3359

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 1, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator ANDREW ZWICKER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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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.

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

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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, consisting of actions that address the
39 immediate, direct results of a natural disaster, including the
40 provision of search and rescue operations, emergency shelter and
41 food provision, medical care, management of damaged utilities, the
42 patrolling of looting-prone areas, and damage assessment; and

43 (4) recovery spending, consisting of short- and long-term
44 activities designed to restore communities to normal or better
45 conditions, including returning utility systems to operational

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.

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1 standards; managing debris; reconstructing public infrastructure;
2 providing redevelopment grants, loans, and legal assistance; and
3 rebuilding communities.

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

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

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

23 2. a. The Commissioner of Education shall promulgate "user-
24 friendly," plain language budget summary forms for the use of
25 school districts. The commissioner shall also promulgate a
26 procedure for the submission by each school district of the required
27 budget summary form to the Department of Education following the
28 approval of the budget.

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

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

47 c. The plain language budget summary shall be submitted to
48 the Department of Education in such form as determined by the

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1 commissioner, and, upon its receipt of the summary, the department
2 shall make the summary available to the public through an Internet
3 website maintained by the department in an easily accessible
4 location. The information on the web site shall be presented as data
5 that can be downloaded by the public for comparative purposes
6 using commonly-used software.

7 (cf: P.L.2007, c.53, s.2)

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

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

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

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

43 c. The plain language budget summary shall be submitted to
44 the division in such form as determined by the Local Finance
45 Board, and, upon its receipt of the summary, the division shall make
46 the summary available to the public through an Internet website
47 maintained by the division. The information on the website shall be

1 presented as data that can be downloaded by the public for
2 comparative purposes using commonly-used software.

3 (cf: P.L.2007, c.63, s.39)

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5 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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

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

- 23 (1) Preparedness spending, consisting of measures intended to
24 enhance the ability to mitigate against, respond to, and
25 recover from a disaster, including pre-event contracting,
26 public awareness or outreach campaigns, training, warning
27 system installation, response and recovery planning, vital
28 food and medical supply maintenance, emergency operation
29 center management, and emergency personnel on
30 mobilization;
- 31 (2) Mitigation spending, consisting of measures to reduce or
32 eliminate the potential harmful consequences of disasters,
33 including retrofitting buildings and infrastructure, buying out
34 vulnerable property, establishing hazard-mitigation plans,
35 building tornado safe rooms, implementing building safety
36 codes, and any measure consistent with eligibility for funding
37 consideration from the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant
38 Program;
- 39 (3) Response spending, consisting of actions that address the
40 immediate, direct results of a natural disaster, including the
41 provision of search and rescue operations, emergency shelter
42 and food provision, medical care, management of damaged
43 utilities, the patrolling of looting-prone areas, and damage
44 assessment; and
- 45 (4) Recovery spending, consisting of short- and long-term
46 activities designed to restore communities to normal or better
47 conditions, including returning utility systems to operational
48 standards; managing debris; reconstructing public

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1 infrastructure; providing redevelopment grants, loans, and
2 legal assistance; and rebuilding communities.

3 Within each category of spending, the bill directs the natural
4 disaster spending summary to report where the funding originated
5 for the various expenditures, and whether a reimbursement is
6 anticipated. If spending originated with a different unit of
7 government, such as the State or federal government, then the plain-
8 language summary is required to indicate which unit was the
9 source.

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