

SENATE, No. 4856

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 19, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator JOHN F. MCKEON
District 27 (Essex and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Water Conservation and Reuse Study Commission.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing the Water Conservation and Reuse Study
2 Commission.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “Water
8 Conservation and Reuse Study Commission Act.”

9
10 2. a. The Legislature finds and declares that:

11 (1) the State of New Jersey faces ongoing challenges related to
12 water scarcity due to drought conditions and increasing demands on
13 its water resources;

14 (2) the reliance on new or enhanced surface and groundwater
15 supplies to meet increasing demand should be supplemented by water
16 conservation and the use and reuse of water that is otherwise wasted;
17 and

18 (3) promoting water conservation and reuse technologies, such as
19 greywater recycling, rainwater catchment systems, and atmospheric
20 water generators, is essential for ensuring a sustainable and secure
21 water future for the State.

22 b. The Legislature therefore determines that it is in the public
23 interest to establish a commission to study the use of water
24 conservation systems and methods, such as greywater recycling,
25 rainwater catchment systems and atmospheric water generators in the
26 State.

27
28 3. As used in this act:

29 "Atmospheric water generator" means a device that extracts water
30 from ambient air humidity.

31 "Certified greywater recycling system " means an NSF/ANSI 350-
32 certified greywater recycling system, the effluent from which is used
33 only for subsurface disposal or subsurface irrigation in compliance
34 with State rules and guidelines concerning water recycling and reuse.

35 "Commission" means the Water Conservation and Reuse Study
36 Commission established pursuant to section 4 of this act.

37 "Department" means the Department of Community Affairs.

38 "Greywater" means wastewater which normally does not receive
39 human body wastes or industrial waste and is approved for use by a
40 local health department.

41 “Greywater recycling system” means a system designed to collect
42 and recycle greywater.

43 "NSF/ANSI 350-certified" means certified to meet the
44 NSF/American National Standards Institute 350 Water Reuse
45 Systems Certification for onsite residential and commercial
46 greywater recycling systems.

47 "Rainwater catchment system" means a system designed to
48 collect, store, and distribute rainwater for appropriate use in a

1 residential building, commercial building, or development
2 constructed pursuant to specifications set forth in the National
3 Standard Plumbing Code, Appendix G, G.5.1 et seq and G.7.1 et seq
4 of 2024 or any updates thereto.

5 "Water conservation and reuse" means the utilization of a
6 rainwater catchment system, a certified greywater recycling system,
7 an atmospheric water generator or another similar system.

8
9 4. a. There is established the Water Conservation and Reuse
10 Study Commission. For the purpose of complying with Article V,
11 Section IV, paragraph 1 of the Constitution of the State of New
12 Jersey, the Water Conservation and Reuse Study Commission is
13 allocated to the Department of Community Affairs but shall be
14 independent of the direct control or supervision of the department.

15 b. The Water Conservation and Reuse Study Commission shall
16 consist of 19 members as follows:

17 (1) the Commissioner of Community Affairs or a designee, who
18 shall serve ex officio;

19 (2) the Commissioner of Environmental Protection or a designee,
20 who shall serve ex officio;

21 (3) the Commissioner of Health or a designee, who shall serve ex
22 officio; and

23 (4) 16 public members to be appointed by the Governor as
24 follows:

25 (a) one member representing the Plumbing Subcode Committee
26 of the Uniform Construction Code Advisory Board;

27 (b) one member representing the Mechanical Contractors
28 Association of New Jersey, appointed by the governor;

29 (c) one member representing the American Society of Plumbing
30 Engineers – New Jersey;

31 (d) one member representing the New Jersey Plumbing
32 Inspectors Association;

33 (e) one member representing the New Jersey State League of
34 Master Plumbers;

35 (f) one member representing the South Jersey Mechanical
36 Contractors Association;

37 (g) one member representing New Jersey plumbing and heating,
38 ventilation, and cooling contractors;

39 (h) one member representing the International Association of
40 Plumbing and Mechanical Officials;

41 (i) three members representing organized labor associated with
42 the New Jersey plumbing industry from United Association Local 9,
43 Local 24 and Local 322;

44 (j) one member representing the New Jersey Builders
45 Association;

46 (k) one member representing New Jersey realtors;

47 (l) one member representing the New Jersey chapter of the
48 Commercial Real Estate Development Association; and

1 (m) two persons with a background or expertise in water
2 conservation or reuse.

3 c. In appointing members to the commission, the governor shall
4 solicit and consider recommendations from the organizations
5 enumerated in subsection a. of this section.

6 d. Any vacancy in the membership shall be filled in the same
7 manner as the original appointment was made. Any member may be
8 removed for cause by the Governor. Members of the commission
9 shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for
10 necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties
11 subject to the availability of funds therefor.

12 e. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable
13 following the appointment of its members to elect a chairperson and
14 to select a secretary, who need not be a member of the commission.
15 The presence of 11 members of the commission shall constitute a
16 quorum. The commission may conduct business without a quorum,
17 but may vote on recommendations only when a quorum is present.
18 The commission may adopt rules of procedure and operation in
19 furtherance of its responsibilities. The commission may meet at the
20 call of its chairperson at the times and in the places it may deem
21 appropriate and necessary to fulfill its duties, and may conduct public
22 hearings at such place or places as it may designate.

23 f. The commission may divide itself into such subcommittees and
24 task forces as may be appropriate. The subcommittees and task forces
25 may include persons other than members of the commission, such as
26 plumbers or plumbing contractors, engineers, academicians,
27 government officers, environmental groups, representatives of
28 business, or other professionals, and may enter into such cooperative
29 agreements as it deems necessary to accomplish its purposes.
30 Persons serving on task forces who are not members of the
31 commission shall serve at the appointment of the chairperson and
32 shall be non-voting participants in the task forces. The commission
33 may solicit and receive reports and testimony from independent
34 experts, other qualified individuals, and members of the general
35 public.

36 g. (1) The department shall provide such staff services as
37 may be required by the commission to fulfill its responsibilities.

38 (2) The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
39 avail itself of the services or employees of any State, county, or
40 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, agency, or
41 authority as it may require and as may be available to it for its
42 purposes; to employ counsel and contract for professional and
43 consulting services; to employ stenographic and clerical assistants;
44 and to incur traveling and other miscellaneous expenses as it may
45 deem necessary, in order to perform its duties, and as may be within
46 the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for its
47 purposes.

- 1 5. a. The commission shall:
- 2 (1) examine existing State and local policies and programs
- 3 encouraging or posing impediments to water conservation and reuse;
- 4 (2) analyze the benefits of expanding certified greywater
- 5 recycling systems and other water conservation and reuse
- 6 technologies in residential and non-residential construction;
- 7 (3) measure the effects of implementing water conservation and
- 8 reuse incentives or requirements on construction costs, consumer
- 9 savings and public health;
- 10 (4) identify and make recommendations concerning opportunities
- 11 for potential statutory changes or new statutes to be considered for
- 12 adoption by the Legislature; and
- 13 (5) make such other recommendations as the commission deems
- 14 necessary concerning water conservation and reuse.
- 15 b. The commission may:
- 16 (1) examine the functions, duties, operations, and programs of
- 17 local governmental units and review statutes, regulations,
- 18 ordinances, resolutions, opinions, orders, and agreements that govern
- 19 water conservation and reuse. In formulating its recommendations,
- 20 the commission may consider existing statutes and pending and
- 21 proposed bills and resolutions that provide a means to improve or
- 22 revise water conservation and reuse programs, and may evaluate
- 23 current conservation and water reuse programs that have been
- 24 proposed or implemented in other states and jurisdictions; and
- 25 (2) consider:
- 26 (a) certain types of structures where rainwater catchment systems
- 27 may be appropriate. Such structures may include multi-family
- 28 residential complexes with over 50 units, commercial structures over
- 29 10,000 gross square feet, data centers and warehouses over 100,000
- 30 gross square feet, hospitals and hotels. Such structures shall not
- 31 include single family residences or multi-family residences with
- 32 fewer than 20 units;
- 33 (b) the costs and benefits of state or local financial incentives such
- 34 as tax credits or rebates for the installation of water conservation
- 35 systems;
- 36 (c) the applicability of existing nationally recognized standards
- 37 and certification programs governing reuse systems, including
- 38 rainwater harvesting, greywater reuse, and alternate water source
- 39 systems, and whether the adoption or incorporation of such standards
- 40 into the New Jersey National Standard Plumbing Code would support
- 41 safe and scalable implementation; and
- 42 (d) the availability and role of certification programs, installer
- 43 qualifications, and inspection protocols necessary to ensure proper
- 44 design, installation, and maintenance of water conservation and reuse
- 45 systems.
- 46 c. The commission shall issue an interim report of its progress
- 47 no later than 12 months following its organization. The commission
- 48 shall issue a final report of its findings, conclusions, and

1 recommendations no later than 24 months following its organization.
2 Both the interim and final report shall be submitted to the Governor
3 and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the
4 Legislature. The commission shall publish its reports and any
5 documents or information it deems appropriate in a prominent
6 location on the Internet website of the Department of Community
7 Affairs.

8
9 6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire six
10 months after the date of the final report issued pursuant to section 5
11 of this act.

12 13 14 STATEMENT

15
16 This bill establishes the Water Conservation and Reuse Study
17 Commission (commission). The commission is allocated to the
18 Department of Community Affairs but is to be independent of the
19 direct control or supervision of the department.

20 Under the bill, the commission is required to:

21 (1) examine existing State and local policies and programs
22 encouraging or posing impediments to water conservation and reuse;

23 (2) analyze the benefits of expanding water conservation and
24 reuse technologies in residential and non-residential construction;

25 (3) measure the effects of implementing water conservation and
26 reuse incentives or requirements on construction costs, consumer
27 savings and public health;

28 (4) identify and make recommendations concerning opportunities
29 for potential statutory changes or new statutes to be considered for
30 adoption by the Legislature; and

31 (5) make such other recommendations as the commission deems
32 necessary concerning water conservation and reuse.

33 The commission is to consist of 19 members, including the
34 Commissioner of Community Affairs, the Commissioner of
35 Environmental Protection, and the Commissioner of Health, as well
36 as 16 public members appointed by the Governor.

37 The commission is required to issue a final report of its findings,
38 conclusions, and recommendations no later than 24 months following
39 its organization, and to publish its reports and any documents or
40 information it deems appropriate in a prominent location on the
41 Internet website of the Department of Community Affairs.