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Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Christie Whitman today signed the following pieces of legislation:

A-20, sponsored by Assembly Members Jack Collins (R-Salem/Cumberland/Gloucester) and Joseph V. Doria, Jr. (D-Hudson) and Senators Diane B. Allen (R-Burlington/Camden) and Donald T. DiFrancesco (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union), appropriates \$26,311,000 of federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds. The funds were recently made available by the federal government to assist eligible low-income persons with their home heating bills.

Due to the availability of these federal funds, Gov. Whitman announced on February 24 that the state LIHEAP would be expanded to provide 145,000 low-income households, including 90,000 senior citizens, with financial help with their home heating bills. The federal allocation also authorizes funds already expended by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to assist low-income households with particularly high cooling costs from the 1999 heat wave, and unanticipated costs due to destruction from Hurricane Floyd. LIHEAP is jointly administered by the DHS and the Department of Community Affairs.

A-1424, sponsored by Assembly Members Alex DeCroce (R-Essex/Morris/Passaic) and Carol J. Murphy (R-Essex/Morris/Passaic), prohibits using Department of Transportation (DOT) property for the storage or handling of radioactive contaminated material. The bill is primarily directed at private companies that use DOT property to store or handle radioactive-contaminated materials. However, the prohibition does not apply to DOT itself - in the event the department obtains appropriate environmental approvals to store or handle radioactive-contaminated materials on its property. Under past law, private companies were required to obtain DOT approval and applicable environmental approvals prior to storing or handling any hazardous substance on DOT property.

A-760, sponsored by Assembly Member Gerald H. Zecker (R-Essex/Passaic) and Senators Andrew R. Ciesla (R-Ocean/Monmouth) and Henry P. McNamara (R-Bergen/Passaic), changes the name of the Interstate Sanitation Commission to the Interstate Environmental Commission, and the Interstate Sanitation District to the Interstate Environmental District. The bill is intended to clarify the role of the Commission by changing the name of the Commission and the District to more accurately reflect its full scope of activities and purpose.