

987 REGULAR SESSION

Ch. 605

NEW YORK STATE WATER RESOURCES INSTITUTE

CHAPTER 605

Approved and effective Aug. 3, 1987

AN ACT to establish the New York state water resources institute at Cornell University
The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1. Legislative findings. Water resource quality and management, particularly groundwater, is a high priority issue with broad implications for communities throughout New York state. Urban, suburban, rural and primitive areas are known to be impacted by pollution of groundwater. Similar concerns have sparked national interest in the protection of our water resources to which researchers in New York have been contributing, and it is apparent that these efforts now must be directed more precisely at the issues and circumstances in New York locales. The department of environmental conservation groundwater management program reports summarize present and future problems of groundwater contamination in the Long Island and upstate New York regions. The Long Island aquifer, the largest in its scale and population served, is threatened with pesticides as well as landfill leachates, industrial solvents and hydrocarbons from leaky underground fuel storage tanks. In upstate New York, similar problems are evident. Hazardous waste sites in both regions are of special concern and numerous landfills present actual or potential contamination problems. With groundwater supplying drinking water to over two-thirds of the population of New York, attention to these areas cannot be put off. It is essential that New York equip itself to meet these challenges. The state has a number of regulatory and resource management strategies to meet many of the needs, but it is clear that the agencies with these responsibilities cannot alone be expected to (i) conduct needed research, (ii) develop the technical and scientific information needed to have sound prevention, protection and corrective programs for our water resources, and (iii) assist localities and their residents in understanding the nature of risks and their management, through educational and informational programs. Accordingly, the legislature finds that greater emphasis should be placed on problem solving and long-term water resources research needs, as well as assisting localities and their residents with the water resources protection and management challenges which must be faced now and in the future. The legislature further finds that a water resources institute, focusing on both research and extension should be established in support of the water resources management programs of New York and its localities.

2. New York state water resources institute. The legislature therefore establishes a New York state water resources institute at Cornell university and for this purpose designates the water resources institute established pursuant to federal law (PL 98-242; 95-467; and

PL 88-379) for the state of New York and which resides at Cornell university in Ithaca as the New York state water resources institute, hereinafter referred as the institute to address critical problems of water resource quality and management, particularly groundwater, through academic and extension leadership.

3. Purposes of the institute. The purposes of the institute shall include:

- (a) increasing local government officials' awareness and understanding of the water resource management problems, particularly groundwater, and the options available for addressing these issues;
- (b) educating the public regarding the need to conserve and protect water resources;
- (c) assisting in the development of such public strategies as the development of an information base to protect and manage critical recharge areas and especially catchment areas in order that public health is securely protected;
- (d) developing an awareness of toxic chemicals, the risk they pose, and their multiple sources, so that contamination may be avoided or expeditiously remedied;
- (e) where contamination has occurred, to assist in identifying cost effective trackdown and remedial measures;
- (f) working in conjunction with key agencies such as the departments of environmental conservation and health so that the state water resource management programs can be adopted and implemented at the local level;
- (g) developing innovative and effective informational and training techniques so that communities throughout the state can be assisted with their water resource management problems at low cost;
- (h) recommending alternative institutional forms that may be adopted by one or more local governments to maximize the use of aquifers while assuring the continued supply of potable water for all persons, institutions and commercial enterprises on or near such aquifer.

4. Research, education, training, and extension programs.

1. The institution shall pursue and sponsor, both at Cornell and elsewhere, investigations and experiments of either a practical or basic nature, the education and training of scientists and specialists, and outreach activities for the dissemination of information and the provision of technical assistance relating to the state's water resources.

2. The institute shall pursue research programs which may include but not be limited to:

- (a) the aspects of the hydrologic cycle;

- (b) supply and demand for water;
- (c) conservation and best use of available supplies of water,
- (d) methods for increasing such supplies;
- (e) vulnerability of certain supplies to contamination and depletion including sources of contamination and prevention actions;
- (f) conjunctive management of multiple supply sources;
- (g) surface and groundwater watershed identification, management, and protection;
- (h) wellhead identification, management and protection;
- (i) remediation of contaminated supplies;
- (j) transport and fate of contaminants from place of origin, through soils and to receiving waters;
- (k) risk assessment and management;
- (l) economic, legal, social, engineering, recreational, biological, geographic, ecological and other aspects of water problems;
- (m) development of water supplies to promote public health and efficiency;
- (n) expansion of public water supply systems to areas not served to protect groundwater supplies; and
- (o) the development of programs to reduce the risk of contamination of groundwater supplies that may be implemented by one or several local governments within one aquifer to protect such aquifer for the benefit of all water users.

3. The institute shall pursue training and extension activities which may include, but not be limited to:

- (a) identifying, assembling, interpreting, and disseminating the results of scientific and engineering research deemed potentially significant for the solution of water resource problems; and
- (b) training qualified persons in the performance of such scientific information dissemination, utilizing, as practical, the cooperative extension system for such efforts throughout the state.

5. Relation to other state agencies. In carrying out its duties, the institute shall undertake specific projects in support of state agencies, particularly in the development of assessment methodologies and criteria for guidance or standards for use in management and regulatory programs. It shall also provide for information dissemination, including technical and scientific consultation with and briefings for state agencies concerned with water resources management and regulatory affairs.

6. Executive director. Responsibilities of the executive director of the institute shall include but not be limited to:

(a) working cooperatively with academic institutions which are associated with the institute in carrying out its duties; and

(b) coordinating efforts to secure funding to support the work of the institute.

7. Steering committee. The institute shall be guided by a steering committee composed of the commissioner of agriculture and markets, the commissioner of health, the commissioner of environmental conservation or their designees, the vice-president for research at Cornell university, the director of Cornell cooperative extension, the director for research of the Cornell agricultural experiment station of Ithaca, and the dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences or their designees. The dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences shall also serve as chairperson. The steering committee shall render advice regarding:

(a) statewide needs to be addressed by the institute;

(b) funding guidelines for research, training, and extension programs;

(c) guidelines for selection of project staff and investigators;

(d) the designation of technical peer review panels when appropriate;

(e) coordination and cooperation of the institute with the Cornell cooperative extension program statewide;

(f) the coordination of program activities among state agencies, colleges and departments of the university, and others involved in related water resources programs; and

(g) the annual review of progress within the program.

8. Advisory board. An advisory board shall be designated by the steering committee, composed of representatives of industry, agriculture, local government, and other universities. The advisory board shall render advice regarding:

(a) identification of overall priorities of research, training, and outreach programs;

(b) facilitation of the dissemination of research results and educational information and in transmitting the concerns of residents, localities, and state agencies to the institute;

(c) the achievements and deficiencies in the efforts of the program to meet identified needs;

(d) identification of funding sources for institute programs.

9. Meetings. The steering committee shall meet at least two times a year and shall be in contact and consultation with each other as often as is necessary to assure timely and effective implementation of the program. Steering committee members may designate alternates to represent them. The members of the steering committee and advisory board shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

10. Contributions. The institute is authorized to receive any grant or contribution from any person, corporation or association.

11. Funds. The institute is authorized to disburse funds to carry out its programs and activities. Grants may be made for research, training and outreach activities which further the mission of the institute.

12. Reports. An initial summary report on the program shall be submitted to the governor and the legislature on or before December fifteenth, nineteen hundred eightyseven including a description of elements and activities being carried out or planned to be carried out as part of the program, the present and proposed working relationships with other agencies and the projects, activities and undertakings planned for nineteen hundred eighty-eight. Such report shall include recommendations for continued essential planning and implementation for institute programs and related priorities.

13. This act shall take effect immediately.