STATE OF NEW YORK

10395

IN SENATE

May 15, 2026

Introduced by Sen. BYNOE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to creating a public education program concerning water use reduction; and expanding the water conservation manual

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision 8 of section 15-1501 of the environmental conservation law, as added by chapter 401 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as follows:

8. The department shall establish a water conservation and efficiency program with the goals of (a) ensuring improvement of the waters and water dependent natural resources, (b) protecting and restoring the hydrologic and ecosystem integrity of watersheds throughout the state, (c) retaining the quantity of surface water and groundwater in the state, (d) ensuring sustainable use of state waters, and (e) promoting the efficiency of use and reducing losses and waste of water. **For communities that rely on groundwater as their water supply, and are at risk from saltwater intrusion, the department shall develop and implement a public education program to explain to water users in all sectors the necessity of water use reduction. Such program shall explain the limitations and describe effective actions to ensure the sustainability of the water supply.**

§ 2. Paragraph g of subdivision 2 of section 15-1503 of the environmental conservation law, as added by chapter 401 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as follows:

g. the proposed water withdrawal will be implemented in a manner that incorporates environmentally sound and economically feasible water conservation measures**, including mandating use of smart controllers for automatic irrigation systems**; and

§ 3. Subdivision 3 of section 15-1503 of the environmental conservation law, as amended by chapter 401 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as follows:

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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3. In order to assist the development of local water conservation programs for public water supply systems, the department shall continue to publish and distribute a water conservation manual that includes beneficial near term and long range water conservation procedures which reflect local water resource needs and conditions. **Such water conservation manual shall be revised and updated every five years. The first update shall be published in two thousand twenty-eight and then every five years thereafter.** Such manual shall include examples of:

a. methods of identifying and determining the cost effectiveness of distribution system rehabilitation to correct sources of lost water;

b. measures which encourage proper maintenance and water conservation;

c. a public information program to promote water conservation, including industrial and commercial recycling and reuse;

d. household conservation measures; [~~and~~]

e. contingency measures for limiting water use during seasonal or drought shortages[~~.~~]**, and local emergencies or disasters;**

f. best management practices for specific sectors of the water-using community designed to increase engagement and specific actions to increase water conservation;

g. recommended changes to water irrigation practices; and

h. rebate programs to offset the cost of smart controllers for automatic irrigation systems required by paragraph g of subdivision two of this section.

§ 4. This act shall take effect immediately.