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SMITH - INVESTMENT IN WATER SUPPLY NECESSARY TO PROTECT
RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

TRENTON - Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, the Chair of the Senate Environment Committee, issued the following statement today regarding the panel's hearing over water supply issues and the need to fund infrastructure improvements to protect against the next drought:

"Today's hearing was extraordinarily helpful in framing the need to protect and preserve our State's water supply. All the facts point to one irrefutable truth -- unless we invest in the water infrastructure and efforts to conserve our water supply, New Jersey is in some very serious trouble.

"A proposal before the Legislature right now would increase the water usage fee by four cents per thousand gallons, providing a solid investment of \$15 million to water protection and drought mitigation efforts. The impact on the average New Jersey homeowner is minimal -- \$3.20 a year. For less than the cost of a case of bottled water, New Jerseyans can preserve our natural water supply for generations, and ensure that there's water there for our children and grandchildren.

"According to testimony we heard today, this past March was one of the driest on record, and all signs are pointing to a potential drought looming in our future. Unless we begin to beef up the infrastructure, and set up interconnectivity so that water can be transferred to where it's needed most in the State, we're going to be left high and dry, with no one to blame but ourselves."

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