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SMITH LEGISLATION TO HELP 'GREEN' NEW JERSEY'S STATE BUILDINGS APPROVED BY SENATE ENVIRONMENT PANEL

Two measures sponsored by Senate Environment and Energy Committee Chairman Bob Smith that would encourage environmental sustainability in New Jersey state buildings were approved today by the Senate Environment panel. The bills were inspired by the Senator's recent trip to Israel where he viewed firsthand the country's efforts to "green" their Legislature.

"By increasing the level in which state buildings are investing in environmental sustainability measures, we can start to make a difference in reversing the negative impacts that growth can have on our environment and set an example for others throughout the state," said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset. "From simple solutions such as switching to LED lights to larger investments like installing solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations in state-owned buildings, the State of New Jersey could be a leader in reducing our carbon footprint."

The first bill, S-2660, would create an Office of Sustainability tasked with developing and implementing environmental sustainability measures for all state buildings in order to make the buildings more energy efficient, to conserve water and to reduce the state's carbon footprint.

The second bill, S-2692, would require the State Capitol Joint Management Commission to create an environmental sustainability plan specifically for the State House Complex, including energy efficiency, water conservation and emission reduction techniques. The bill would require the commission to consider sustainability initiatives and solutions in respect to contracting, management and operation of the Complex.

During a November trip to Israel, Senator Smith took a tour of Israel's parliament, the Knesset, which has begun to implement more than a dozen initiatives that will make it the "greenest" Legislature in the world. These initiatives include large-scale changes such as installing solar panels on its 49,514 square foot roof, the installation of electric, air conditioning, computer and lighting systems that will automatically turn on and off to conserve energy, and changes like switching from bottled water to pitchers and real glasses to reduce waste, and swapping out light bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs – a switch that has saved the Knesset \$800,000. Green Knesset, as the program is called, will also ensure that every employee is trained on sustainability issues to guarantee that those making the laws are educated and knowledgeable about the green movement.

Both S-2660 and S-2692 were approved by the Committee with a vote of 5-0. They both now head to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for further review.