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**Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program - Helping
New Jersey's Municipalities Become Sustainable Communities through
Water Conservation**

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Abstract:

Situation: As New Jersey's population grows and climate change causes longer periods of drought, more must be done to safeguard a sustainable water supply. The average New Jersey resident uses 100 gallons of water per day (gpd) and up to 185 gpd during the summer. Efforts must be made to change people's behavior to encourage them to conserve water. When landfill space became limited, the country began recycling. Recycling programs began in the elementary school classrooms. The children then took these important lessons home and taught their parents. We need to begin similar efforts for water conservation, educating the children so they can teach their parents.

Action: The Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), received a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to develop a Water Conservation Pilot Program for New Jersey. As part of this effort, three water conservation programs are being developed:

1. Water Conservation in the Classroom teaches children about the importance of water conservation. Some schools will be selected to receive plumbing retrofits and upgrades, while other schools will receive water aerators and automatic shut-off devices for faucets. This program will provide teachers, staff, and students opportunities to work together to use the school, grounds, and the community as a learning tool to help teach environmental conservation practices.
2. Retrofitting Public Buildings for Water Conservation will help reduce municipal expenditures and capital investments including retrofits of public buildings. As demonstration projects, several public buildings will be retrofitted with water saving devices.
3. Landscaping for Water Conservation provides homeowner education about Smart Irrigation Controllers. This technology uses site information such as plant type in each zone, soil moisture, precipitation rates, slope measurements, and sprinkler system output so that watering times and frequency are adjusted accordingly.

Impact Statement:

The overall goal of the Water Conservation Pilot Program is to reduce water use by 10% in five pilot communities: Belmar Borough, Monmouth County; East Greenwich, Gloucester County; Egg Harbor Township, Atlantic County; Livingston, Essex County; and Rahway City, Union County. The lessons learned from the pilot program will be disseminated throughout New Jersey by Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the NJDEP so other communities can follow these examples.

Category: Human Dimensions

Type of Presentation: Poster Presentation