

Retirement plan may be extended

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Gov. Mario Cuomo wants to extend the state's popular early retirement program to local governments trying to cut costs and previously ineligible public university employees.

Three bills put before the Legislature by the governor yesterday would give localities the option of offering a one-shot early retirement period where their qualified workers 55 and older could quit in return for extra service credit on their pensions.

Under the legislation, that early retirement program can last only three months and must be carried out by localities before the end of 1985. Cuomo's legislation also stipulates that the plan be offered by localities in conjunction "with a work force reduction program."

Any county, city, town, village or school board choosing to take the state up on its offer would have to first get its local early retirement program approved by state Comptroller Edward Regan.

Betsy Weiss, spokeswoman for Cuomo, said New York City requested to be, and was, excluded from the legislation.

The governor had pledged earlier to try extending the state's early retirement program to localities.

That state's three-month plan, offered in March in conjunction with layoff proposals and other budget cutting measures to help reduce a potential state budget deficit Cuomo pegged at \$1.8 billion, was supposed to attract between 3,500 and 5,000 retirees. However, Regan announced yesterday that 8,491 state workers actually ended up applying for early retirement.

Regan said that total was more than half the number of all state and local government workers in New York who normally retire within an entire year.

Regan said the Office of Mental Health, with 1,843, had the most early retirement applicants with the Office of Mental Re-

tardation and Developmental Difficulties (993 applicants) second.

The Department of Transportation (668), the Department of Labor (525) and the Office of Court Administration (422) also had hefty numbers of workers opt for early retirement, Regan reported.

Another piece of Cuomo's legislation calls for additional State University of New York and about 500 City University of New York employees to be offered special "supplemental annuities" in return for retiring early.