

SENATE ECONOMIC GROWTH COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4132

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 16, 2023

The Senate Economic Growth Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4132 (1R) with committee amendments.

As amended and reported, this bill requires the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Department of Education, to designate an annual week as “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week.” At minimum, this week would highlight the importance of agriculture and how the agricultural products in this State provide the necessary ingredients for meals. To encourage classroom activities related to this week, the bill requires the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Department of Education, to make available sample educational resources for appropriate grade levels based on their connection to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Additionally, the bill requires the Department of Agriculture to establish the “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Program” to support the implementation of the “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week.” Under the bill, the “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Program” would be established in conjunction with the current “New Jersey Farm to School Program.” As part of the rules and regulations established for the New Jersey Farm to School Program, the bill also requires the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and regulations that encourage additional classroom activities during “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week,” which activities may include, but need not be limited to, personal stories from farmers.

The bill would also allow the Secretary of Agriculture to solicit and accept contributions from private and public sources for the purpose of providing support to help fund the “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Program.”

As amended and reported, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 3426, which was also amended and reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments provide that “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week” would occur on an annual week designated by the

Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Department of Education. As introduced, the week would have been observed on the third week of March.

The committee amendments also revise the types of educational activities that would be used to celebrate the “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week.” As amended, the Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Department of Education, would encourage classroom activities by making available sample educational resources for appropriate grade levels based on their connection to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. As introduced, the bill would have required the development of certain classroom activities and the designation of a children’s book that would have been provided to teachers in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. The amendments also clarify that the “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week” may highlight certain other considerations not specifically identified in the bill.

The committee amendments also limit the scope of the rules and regulations that are required to be adopted for the “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Program.” As amended, these rules and regulations would only be required to encourage additional classroom activities during “New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week,” which may include, but need not be limited to, personal stories from volunteers which may include farmers.

Additionally, the committee amendments revise the effective date of the bill to clarify that the bill would first apply to the first school year beginning after the date of enactment.