

# SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### SENATE, No. 3643

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 9, 2023

The Senate Environment and Energy Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 3643.

This bill would establish a bee-friendly habitat pilot program within the Department of Agriculture (department) to encourage homeowners and businesses to convert their lawns into bee-friendly habitats in order to support and protect the population of bees in the State.

The bill appropriates \$1 million to the fund for the pilot program. Under the program, a homeowner would be eligible for a reimbursement for eligible costs in an amount up to \$250 and businesses would be eligible for up to \$500.

Under the bill, the department would be required to:

(1) develop guidelines and procedures for the submission of applications by homeowners and businesses to receive a reimbursement from the program;

(2) establish criteria for a homeowner or business to qualify for a reimbursement from the program;

(3) develop and maintain an Internet website or webpage providing information on how to start and manage a bee-friendly habitat and information about the pilot program; and

(4) create a list of approved plants, forbs, or legumes that would qualify for reimbursement.

No later than six months after the completion of the pilot program, the department would be required to submit a written report to the Governor and to the Legislature summarizing: the number of homeowners and business who received reimbursement under the pilot program and the amount of money distributed to homeowners and businesses; the effectiveness of the pilot program in assisting with the development of bee-friendly habitats; any recommendations concerning the need for a program or additional funding to encourage the establishment of bee-friendly habitats; and any other information that the department considers relevant in assessing the pilot program.