

ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 4040

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 18, 2023

The Assembly Judiciary Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 4040 (1R).

This bill changes the jurisdiction of regional municipal courts established under the pilot program set forth in P.L.2021, c.191 (C.2B:12-34 et seq.). Under the pilot program, a county in cooperation with five or more municipalities, and working with the Administrative Office of the Courts, can create a regional municipal court operated by the county to consolidate the individual courts of participating municipalities.

Currently, in addition to having jurisdiction over cases originating from the participating municipalities, the pilot program also requires a regional municipal court to handle cases filed by the State Police or any Statewide law enforcement agency, or by any county law enforcement agency, any county code enforcement entity, or by any other non-municipal law enforcement agency, on a countywide basis, even if those matters did not originate from a participating municipality.

Under the bill, the court would no longer be required to hear State Police or any other non-municipal entity cases, and clarifies that it would only hear cases falling within the territorial jurisdiction of the municipal courts of the municipalities participating in the pilot program. However, counties could still, by ordinance, confer upon the regional municipal court jurisdiction over complaints issued by county law enforcement agencies or code enforcement entities.

Any existing regional municipal court would retain jurisdiction over currently pending cases that would no longer fall under the court's jurisdiction, and new cases that no longer fall within the jurisdiction would be filed in the municipal court of the municipality from which the complaint originates.

The bill also provides that the governing body of a county in which a regional municipal court is operating may enter into a contract with a private agency or firm for the purpose of collecting delinquent fees, fines, costs, surcharges, and other penalties or assessments imposed by such court.

The bill would take effect on the first day of the seventh month next following enactment, but the Administrative Director of the Courts could take any anticipatory action in advance of that date as deemed necessary for the timely implementation of the bill.

As reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 4040 (1R) is identical to Assembly Bill No. 5881, which was also reported by the committee on this date.