

ASSEMBLY AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1506

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 9, 2026

The Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1506.

This bill provides that preserved farmland purchased by a qualified beginning farmer would not be subject to the realty transfer fee. Under this bill, the fee would not apply when preserved farmland is acquired by a person who possesses a written certification issued by the Department of Agriculture pursuant to the bill demonstrating that the person qualifies as a qualified beginning farmer. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a procedure to certify in writing a person as a qualified beginning farmer.

The realty transfer fee (fee), established pursuant to P.L.1968, c.49 (C.46:15-5 et seq.), applies to sales and transfers of interests in real property and is imposed upon the recording of deeds evidencing transfers of title to real property in the State. Current law provides a number of full and partial exemptions from the payment of the fee.

New Jersey has long committed to preserving farmland, however New Jersey cannot rest on the success of land preservation. The State needs to do much more to preserve farming itself and take further action to preserve its farmers as well. This bill is intended to remove a disincentive for people to take up the vital and historic role of farmer. Currently, the average age of a farmer in the United States is 57.5 years. The national average age has increased by 1.6 percent annually since 1994, on average, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture. The average age of a New Jersey farmer is 59.7 years, according to the same report.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2026-2027 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.