

ASSEMBLY BUDGET COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5334

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 28, 2026

The Assembly Budget Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5334.

As reported, this bill appropriates \$77,406,208 from constitutionally dedicated corporation business tax (CBT) revenues and various Green Acres funds to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Of the total amount appropriated by the bill, \$75,543,708 would be used by the DEP to provide grants or loans, or both, to assist local government units in the State to acquire or develop lands for recreation and conservation purposes, and \$1,862,500 would be used for the DEP's associated administrative costs.

The total amount of funding allocated for local government projects listed in this bill is \$75,543,708. Of this amount, \$23,155,698 is for projects to acquire lands for recreation and conservation purposes identified in section 4 of the bill, and \$52,388,010 is for projects to develop lands for recreation and conservation purposes identified in section 5 of the bill.

Of the sum for projects to acquire lands for recreation and conservation purposes: \$18,746,365 is allocated for planning incentive open space acquisition projects, which projects located in municipalities and counties that have an open space tax and an approved open space plan; \$2,150,000 is allocated for standard acquisition projects; \$1,559,333 is allocated for open space acquisition projects in urban aid municipalities or sponsored by densely populated counties; and \$700,000 is allocated for site-specific incentive acquisition projects, which are projects located in municipalities that have an open space tax, but do not have an open space plan.

Of the sum for projects to develop lands for recreation and conservation purposes: \$29,003,365 is allocated for local park development projects in urban aid municipalities or sponsored by densely populated counties; \$12,597,959 is allocated for local park development projects in densely or highly populated municipalities or sponsored by highly populated counties; \$9,938,812 is allocated for standard local park development projects, which are projects located in municipalities that do not meet the criteria of the prior two categories; and \$847,874 is allocated for stewardship activity projects.

The projects approved by the bill include projects in “urban aid” and densely or highly populated municipalities and counties. The bill defines a “densely or highly populated municipality” as a municipality with a population density of at least 5,000 persons per square mile or a population of at least 35,000 persons; a “densely populated county” as a county with a population density of at least 5,000 persons per square mile; and a “highly populated county” as a county with a population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile.

To the extent that there are funds remaining after the local government unit projects listed in this bill are offered funding, the bill also authorizes the DEP, with the approval of the Joint Budget Oversight Committee, to use those funds to provide additional funding for local government unit projects listed in this bill as well as for local government unit projects previously approved for funding pursuant to various other laws. The projects listed in the bill have been approved by the DEP and the Garden State Preservation Trust (GSPT).

As reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 5334 is identical to Senate Bill No. 4423, which was also reported by the committee on this date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This bill is not certified as requiring a fiscal note.