

SENATE, No. 2769

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 216th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 24, 2015

Sponsored by:

Senator BOB SMITH

District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)

Senator CHRISTOPHER "KIP" BATEMAN

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Implements 2014 constitutional dedication of CBT revenues for certain environmental purposes; revises State's open space, farmland, and historic preservation programs.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning the constitutional dedication of corporation
2 business tax revenues for certain environmental purposes,
3 supplementing Title 13 of the Revised Statutes, and amending
4 P.L.1999, c.152.

5
6 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
7 of New Jersey:

8
9 1. (New section) Sections 1 through 15 of this act shall be
10 known, and may be cited, as the “Preserve New Jersey Act.”

11
12 2. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that:

13 a. Enhancing the quality of life of the citizens of New Jersey is
14 a paramount policy of the State, and the acquisition, preservation,
15 and stewardship of open space, farmland, and historic properties in
16 New Jersey protect and enhance the character and beauty of the
17 State and provide its citizens with greater opportunities for
18 recreation, relaxation, and education;

19 b. The lands and resources now dedicated to these purposes
20 will not be adequate to meet the needs of an expanding population
21 in years to come, and the open space and farmland that is available
22 and appropriate for these purposes will gradually disappear as the
23 costs of preserving them correspondingly increase;

24 c. The Delaware River, the Passaic River, and the Raritan
25 River, and their respective tributaries, and many other areas
26 throughout the State have been subject to serious flooding over the
27 years, causing on some occasions loss of life and significant
28 property damage;

29 d. Beginning on October 28, 2012, the post-tropical storm
30 commonly referred to as “Hurricane Sandy” struck New Jersey,
31 producing unprecedented severe weather conditions, including
32 enormous storm surges, devastating wind, and widespread flooding,
33 crippling entire communities across New Jersey, and inflicting
34 incalculable harm to the economy of the State;

35 e. The acquisition of properties damaged by Hurricane Sandy
36 and of other damaged and flood-prone properties throughout the
37 State is in the best interests of the State to prevent future losses of
38 life and property;

39 f. “Blue Acres” is the term used to refer to the acquisition, for
40 recreation and conservation purposes, of lands that have been
41 damaged by, or may be prone to incurring damage caused by,
42 storms or storm-related flooding, or that may buffer or protect other
43 lands from such damage;

44 g. Under the Blue Acres Program, structures on acquired
45 property are demolished, the debris is removed, and the property is
46 preserved for recreation and conservation purposes;

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

- 1 h. Agriculture plays an integral role in the prosperity and well-
2 being of the State as well as providing a fresh and abundant supply
3 of food for its citizens;
- 4 i. Much of the farmland in the State faces an imminent threat
5 of permanent conversion to non-farm uses, and retention and
6 development of an economically viable agricultural industry is of
7 high public priority;
- 8 j. There is an urgent need to preserve the State's historic
9 heritage to enable present and future generations to experience,
10 understand, and enjoy the landmarks of New Jersey's role in the
11 birth and development of this nation;
- 12 k. The restoration and preservation of properties of historic
13 character and importance in the State are central to meeting this
14 need, and a significant number of these historic properties are
15 located in urban centers, where their restoration and preservation
16 will advance urban revitalization efforts of the State and local
17 governments;
- 18 l. There is growing public recognition that the quality of life,
19 economic prosperity, and environmental quality in New Jersey are
20 served by the protection and timely preservation of open space and
21 farmland and better management of the lands, resources, historic
22 properties, and recreational facilities that are already under public
23 ownership or protection;
- 24 m. The protection and preservation of New Jersey's water
25 resources, including the quality and quantity of the State's limited
26 water supply, are essential to the quality of life and the economic
27 health of the citizens of the State;
- 28 n. The preservation of the existing diversity of animal and plant
29 species is essential to sustaining both the environment and the
30 economy of the Garden State, and the conservation of adequate
31 habitat for endangered, threatened, and other rare species is
32 necessary to preserve this biodiversity;
- 33 o. As recognized by the voters of the State when they, on
34 November 4, 2014, approved an amendment to the State
35 Constitution to dedicate a portion of corporation business tax
36 revenues specifically for the purposes of open space, farmland, and
37 historic preservation, there is a need to continue the State programs
38 previously funded by the "Green Acres, Water Supply and
39 Floodplain Protection, and Farmland and Historic Preservation
40 Bond Act of 2009" (P.L.2009, c.117), the "Green Acres, Farmland,
41 Blue Acres, and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 2007"
42 (P.L.2007, c.119), Article VIII, Section II, paragraph 7 of the State
43 Constitution, the "Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation,
44 and Blue Acres Bond Act of 1995" (P.L.1995, c.204), and the nine
45 previous similar bond acts enacted in 1961, 1971, 1974, 1978, 1981,
46 1983, 1987, 1989, and 1992, and various implementing laws; and
- 47 p. It is therefore in the public interest to preserve and protect as
48 much land for recreation and conservation purposes, including lands

1 that protect water supplies and flood-prone lands, and for farmland
2 preservation purposes, and as many historic properties, as possible
3 within the means provided by Article VIII, Section II, paragraph 6
4 of the State Constitution.

5
6 3. (New section) As used in sections 1 through 15 of this act:

7 “Acquisition” or “acquire” means the same as that term is
8 defined in section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

9 “Blue Acres cost” means the expenses incurred in connection
10 with: all things deemed necessary or useful and convenient for the
11 acquisition by the State or a qualifying tax exempt nonprofit
12 organization, for recreation and conservation purposes, of lands that
13 have been damaged by, or may be prone to incurring damage caused
14 by, storms or storm-related flooding, or that may buffer or protect
15 other lands from such damage; the execution of any agreements or
16 franchises deemed by the Department of Environmental Protection
17 to be necessary or useful and convenient in connection with any
18 Blue Acres project authorized by this act; the procurement or
19 provision of appraisal, archaeological, architectural, conservation,
20 design, engineering, financial, geological, historic research,
21 hydrological, inspection, legal, planning, relocation, surveying, or
22 other professional advice, estimates, reports, services, or studies;
23 the purchase of title insurance; the undertaking of feasibility
24 studies; the demolition of structures, the removal of debris, and the
25 restoration of lands to a natural state or to a state useful for
26 recreation and conservation purposes; the establishment of a reserve
27 fund or funds for working capital, operating, maintenance, or
28 replacement expenses as the Director of the Division of Budget and
29 Accounting in the Department of the Treasury may determine; and
30 reimbursement to any fund of the State of moneys that may have
31 been transferred or advanced therefrom to any fund established by
32 this act, or any moneys that may have been expended therefrom for,
33 or in connection with, this act.

34 “Blue Acres project” means any project of the State or a
35 qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization to acquire, for
36 recreation and conservation purposes, lands that have been damaged
37 by, or may be prone to incurring damage caused by, storms or
38 storm-related flooding, or that may buffer or protect other lands
39 from such damage, and which is funded with moneys made
40 available pursuant to subsection b. of section 5 of this act.

41 “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Environmental
42 Protection.

43 “Committee” means the State Agriculture Development
44 Committee established pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1983, c.31
45 (C.4:1C-4).

46 “Constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys” means any moneys
47 made available pursuant to Article VIII, Section II, paragraph 6 of
48 the State Constitution deposited in the funds established pursuant to

1 sections 6, 7, 8, and 9 of this act, and appropriated by law, for
2 recreation and conservation, farmland preservation, or historic
3 preservation purposes set forth in Article VIII, Section II, paragraph
4 6 of the State Constitution or this act.

5 “Convey” or “conveyance” means the same as that term is
6 defined in section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

7 “Cost” means the expenses incurred in connection with: all
8 things deemed necessary or useful and convenient for the
9 acquisition or development of lands for recreation and conservation
10 purposes, the acquisition of development easements or fee simple
11 titles to farmland, or the preservation of historic properties, as the
12 case may be; the execution of any agreements or franchises deemed
13 by the Department of Environmental Protection, State Agriculture
14 Development Committee, or New Jersey Historic Trust, as the case
15 may be, to be necessary or useful and convenient in connection with
16 any project funded in whole or in part using constitutionally
17 dedicated CBT moneys; the procurement or provision of appraisal,
18 archaeological, architectural, conservation, design, engineering,
19 financial, geological, historic research, hydrological, inspection,
20 legal, planning, relocation, surveying, or other professional advice,
21 estimates, reports, services, or studies; the purchase of title
22 insurance; the undertaking of feasibility studies; the establishment
23 of a reserve fund or funds for working capital, operating,
24 maintenance, or replacement expenses, as the Director of the
25 Division of Budget and Accounting in the Department of the
26 Treasury may determine; and reimbursement to any fund of the
27 State of moneys that may have been transferred or advanced
28 therefrom to any fund established by this act, or any moneys that
29 may have been expended therefrom for, or in connection with, this
30 act.

31 “Department” means the Department of Environmental
32 Protection.

33 "Development" or "develop" means, except as used in the
34 definitions of "acquisition" and "development easement" in this
35 section, any improvement, including a stewardship activity, made to
36 a land or water area designed to expand and enhance its utilization
37 for recreation and conservation purposes, and shall include the
38 construction, renovation, or repair of any such improvement, but
39 shall not mean shore protection or beach nourishment or
40 replenishment activities.

41 “Development easement” means the same as that term is defined
42 in section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

43 “Emergency intervention” means an immediate assessment or
44 capital improvement necessary to protect or stabilize the structural
45 integrity of a historic property.

46 “Farmland” means the same as that term is defined in section 3
47 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

1 “Farmland preservation,” “farmland preservation purposes,” or
2 “preservation of farmland” means the same as those terms are
3 defined in section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

4 “Garden State Preservation Trust” or “trust” means the Garden
5 State Preservation Trust established pursuant to section 4 of
6 P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-4).

7 “Green Acres bond act” means: P.L.1961, c.46; P.L.1971, c.165;
8 P.L.1974, c.102; P.L.1978, c.118; P.L.1983, c.354; P.L.1987, c.265;
9 P.L.1989, c.183; P.L.1992, c.88; P.L.1995, c.204; P.L.2007, c.119;
10 P.L.2009, c.117; and any State general obligation bond act that may
11 be approved after the date of enactment of this act for the purpose
12 of providing funding for the acquisition or development of lands for
13 recreation and conservation purposes or for farmland preservation
14 purposes.

15 “Historic preservation,” “historic preservation purposes,” or
16 “preservation of historic properties” means the same as those terms
17 are defined in section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3) and shall
18 also include emergency intervention and the acquisition of a
19 historic preservation easement.

20 “Historic preservation easement” means an interest in land, less
21 than fee simple title thereto, that is purchased from a private or
22 governmental property owner to permanently protect a historic
23 property, and that is granted by the property owner to the New
24 Jersey Historic Trust, a local government unit, or a qualifying tax
25 exempt nonprofit organization.

26 “Historic property” means the same as that term is defined in
27 section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

28 “Land” or “lands” means the same as that term is defined in
29 section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

30 “Local government unit” means the same as that term is defined
31 in section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

32 “New Jersey Historic Trust” means the entity established
33 pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1967, c.124 (C.13:1B-15.111).

34 “Permitted investments” means the same as that term is defined
35 in section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

36 “Preserve New Jersey Blue Acres Fund” means the Preserve
37 New Jersey Blue Acres Fund established pursuant to section 7 of
38 this act.

39 “Preserve New Jersey Farmland Preservation Fund” means the
40 Preserve New Jersey Farmland Preservation Fund established
41 pursuant to section 8 of this act.

42 “Preserve New Jersey Green Acres Fund” means the Preserve
43 New Jersey Green Acres Fund established pursuant to section 6 of
44 this act.

45 “Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund” means the
46 Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund established
47 pursuant to section 9 of this act.

1 “Preserve New Jersey Fund Account” means the Preserve New
2 Jersey Fund Account established pursuant to section 4 of this act.

3 “Project” means all things deemed necessary or useful and
4 convenient in connection with the acquisition or development of
5 lands for recreation and conservation purposes, the acquisition of
6 development easements or fee simple titles to farmland, or the
7 preservation of historic properties, as the case may be.

8 “Qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization” means the same
9 as that term is defined in section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

10 “Recreation and conservation purposes” means the same as that
11 term is defined in section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3).

12 “Stewardship activity” means an activity, which is beyond
13 routine operations and maintenance, undertaken by the State, a local
14 government unit, or a qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization
15 to repair, restore, or improve lands acquired or developed for
16 recreation and conservation purposes or acquired for farmland
17 preservation purposes for the purpose of enhancing or protecting
18 those lands for recreation and conservation purposes or farmland
19 preservation purposes.

20

21 4. (New section) There is established in the General Fund a
22 special account to be known as the “Preserve New Jersey Fund
23 Account.”

24 a. The State Treasurer shall credit to this account:

25 (1) (a) in each State fiscal year commencing with State fiscal
26 year 2016 through and including State fiscal year 2019 an amount
27 equal to 71 percent of the four percent of the revenue annually
28 derived from the tax imposed pursuant to the “Corporation Business
29 Tax Act (1945),” P.L.1945, c.162 (C.54:10A-1 et seq.), as amended
30 and supplemented, or any other State law of similar effect,
31 dedicated to recreation and conservation, farmland preservation,
32 and historic preservation purposes pursuant to subparagraph (a) of
33 Article VIII, Section II, paragraph 6 of the State Constitution; and

34 (b) in each State fiscal year commencing in State fiscal year
35 2020 and annually thereafter, an amount equal to 78 percent of the
36 six percent of the revenue annually derived from the tax imposed
37 pursuant to the “Corporation Business Tax Act (1945),” P.L.1945,
38 c.162 (C.54:10A-1 et seq.), as amended and supplemented, or any
39 other State law of similar effect, dedicated to recreation and
40 conservation, farmland preservation, and historic preservation
41 purposes pursuant to subparagraph (a) of Article VIII, Section II,
42 paragraph 6 of the State Constitution; and

43 (2) in each State fiscal year, an amount equal to the amount
44 dedicated pursuant to subparagraph (b) of Article VIII, Section II,
45 paragraph 6 of the State Constitution.

46 b. In each State fiscal year, the amount credited to the Preserve
47 New Jersey Fund Account shall be appropriated from time to time
48 by the Legislature only for the applicable purposes set forth in

1 Article VIII, Section II, paragraph 6 of the State Constitution and
2 this act for:

3 (1) providing funding, including loans or grants, for the
4 preservation, including acquisition, development, and stewardship,
5 of lands for recreation and conservation purposes, including lands
6 that protect water supplies and lands that have incurred flood or
7 storm damage or are likely to do so, or that may buffer or protect
8 other properties from flood or storm damage;

9 (2) providing funding, including loans or grants, for the
10 preservation and stewardship of land for agricultural or horticultural
11 use and production;

12 (3) providing funding, including loans or grants, for historic
13 preservation; and

14 (4) paying administrative costs associated with (1) through (3)
15 of this subsection.

16 c. Nothing in this act shall authorize any State entity to use
17 constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys for the purpose of making
18 any payments relating to any bonds, notes, or other obligations.

19

20 5. (New section) a. In State fiscal year 2016 through and
21 including State fiscal year 2019, of the amount credited by the State
22 Treasurer to the Preserve New Jersey Fund Account pursuant to
23 paragraph (1) of subsection a. of section 4 of this act:

24 (1) 64 percent shall be deposited into the Preserve New Jersey
25 Green Acres Fund established pursuant to section 6 of this act;

26 (2) 4 percent shall be deposited into the Preserve New Jersey
27 Blue Acres Fund established pursuant to section 7 of this act;

28 (3) 29 percent shall be deposited into the Preserve New Jersey
29 Farmland Preservation Fund established pursuant to section 8 of
30 this act; and

31 (4) 3 percent shall be deposited into the Preserve New Jersey
32 Historic Preservation Fund established pursuant to section 9 of this
33 act.

34 b. In State fiscal year 2016 through and including State fiscal
35 year 2019, of the amount credited by the State Treasurer to the
36 Preserve New Jersey Fund Account pursuant to paragraph (2) of
37 subsection a. of section 4 of this act, each State park, forest, or
38 wildlife management area shall receive an amount equal to the
39 amount of revenue annually derived from leases or conveyances of
40 lands at that State park, forest, or wildlife management area, as
41 appropriate, to be used for recreation and conservation purposes at
42 that State park, forest, or wildlife management area.

43

44 6. (New section) a. The State Treasurer shall establish a fund
45 to be known as the "Preserve New Jersey Green Acres Fund" and
46 shall deposit into the fund all moneys received pursuant to
47 subsection a. of section 5 of this act and any other moneys
48 appropriated by law for deposit into the fund.

1 Moneys in the fund shall be invested in permitted investments or
2 shall be held in interest-bearing accounts in those depositories as
3 the State Treasurer may select, and may be invested and reinvested
4 in permitted investments or as other trust funds in the custody of the
5 State Treasurer in the manner provided by law. All interest or other
6 income or earnings derived from the investment or reinvestment of
7 moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund. Moneys derived
8 from the payment of principal and interest on the loans to local
9 government units authorized by this act shall also be held in the
10 fund.

11 b. Of the amount deposited each State fiscal year into the
12 Preserve New Jersey Green Acres Fund pursuant to subsection a. of
13 section 5 of this act:

14 (1) 55 percent shall be allocated for the purpose of paying the
15 cost of acquisition and development of lands by the State for
16 recreation and conservation purposes, and the amount provided
17 pursuant to this paragraph shall be allocated as follows:

18 (a) 40 percent shall be allocated for the purpose of paying the
19 cost of acquisition of lands by the State for recreation and
20 conservation purposes; and

21 (b) 60 percent shall be allocated for the purpose of paying the
22 cost of development of lands by the State for recreation and
23 conservation purposes, and of the amount provided pursuant to this
24 subparagraph:

25 (i) 22 percent shall be allocated for the purpose of paying the
26 cost for stewardship activities undertaken on lands administered by
27 the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the department; and

28 (ii) 22 percent shall be allocated for the purpose of paying the
29 cost for stewardship activities undertaken on lands administered by
30 the Division of Parks and Forestry in the department;

31 (2) 38 percent shall be allocated for the purposes of providing
32 grants and loans to assist local government units to pay the cost of
33 acquisition and development of lands for recreation and
34 conservation purposes, and of this amount, 2 percent shall be
35 allocated for stewardship activities undertaken by local government
36 units; and

37 (3) 7 percent shall be allocated for the purposes of providing
38 grants to assist qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organizations to pay
39 the cost of acquisition and development of lands for recreation and
40 conservation purposes, and of this amount, 11 percent shall be
41 allocated for stewardship activities undertaken by qualifying tax
42 exempt nonprofit organizations.

43 c. Any repayments of the principal and interest on loans issued
44 to local government units for the acquisition or development of
45 lands for recreation and conservation purposes using
46 constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys shall be deposited into the
47 Preserve New Jersey Green Acres Fund, and shall be specifically
48 dedicated for the issuance of additional loans in the same manner as

1 provided in subsection b. of section 27 of P.L.1999, c.152
2 (C.13:8C-27).

3 d. (1) The moneys in the fund are specifically dedicated and
4 shall be used for the same purposes and according to the same
5 criteria and provisions as those set forth in section 26 of P.L.1999,
6 c.152 (C.13:8C-26), and as provided pursuant to this act.

7 (2) Grants and loans issued to local government units and grants
8 issued to qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organizations using
9 constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys for the acquisition and
10 development of lands for recreation and conservation purposes shall
11 be subject to the same provisions as those prescribed in section 27
12 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-27), except as otherwise provided in
13 section 10 of this act.

14 e. Moneys in the fund shall not be expended except in
15 accordance with appropriations from the fund made by law. Any
16 act appropriating moneys from the Preserve New Jersey Green
17 Acres Fund shall identify any particular project or projects to be
18 funded by the moneys, and any expenditure for a project for which
19 the location is not identified by municipality and county in the
20 appropriation shall require the approval of the Joint Budget
21 Oversight Committee, or its successor, except as permitted
22 otherwise in accordance with the same exceptions as those specified
23 in paragraph (2) of subsection a. of section 23 of P.L.1999, c.152
24 (C.13:8C-23).

25 f. Unexpended moneys due to project withdrawals,
26 cancellations, or cost savings shall be returned to the fund.

27 g. Of the amount authorized pursuant to this section, not more
28 than five percent shall be utilized for organizational, administrative
29 and other work and services, including salaries, equipment and
30 materials necessary to administer the applicable provisions of this
31 act.

32 h. To the end that municipalities may not suffer a loss of taxes
33 by reason of the acquisition and ownership by the State of lands in
34 fee simple for recreation and conservation purposes, or the
35 acquisition and ownership by qualifying tax exempt nonprofit
36 organizations of lands in fee simple for recreation and conservation
37 purposes that become certified as exempt from property taxes
38 pursuant to P.L.1974, c.167 (C.54:4-3.63 et seq.) or similar laws,
39 the State shall make payments annually in the same manner as
40 payments are made pursuant to section 29 of P.L.1999, c.152
41 (C.13:8C-29).

42 i. The State shall not use the power of eminent domain in any
43 manner for the acquisition of lands by the State for recreation and
44 conservation purposes using constitutionally dedicated CBT
45 moneys in whole or in part unless a concurrent resolution approving
46 that use is approved by both Houses of the Legislature; except that,
47 without the need for such a concurrent resolution, the State may use
48 the power of eminent domain to the extent necessary to establish a

1 value for lands to be acquired from a willing seller by the State for
2 recreation and conservation purposes using constitutionally
3 dedicated CBT moneys in whole or in part.

4

5 7. (New section) a. The State Treasurer shall establish a fund
6 to be known as the "Preserve New Jersey Blue Acres Fund" and
7 shall deposit into the fund all moneys received pursuant to
8 subsection b. of section 5 of this act and any other moneys
9 appropriated by law for deposit into the fund.

10 Moneys in the fund shall be invested in permitted investments or
11 shall be held in interest-bearing accounts in those depositories as
12 the State Treasurer may select, and may be invested and reinvested
13 in permitted investments or as other trust funds in the custody of the
14 State Treasurer in the manner provided by law. All interest or other
15 income or earnings derived from the investment or reinvestment of
16 moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund.

17 b. The moneys in the Preserve New Jersey Blue Acres Fund are
18 specifically dedicated and shall be applied for the purposes of
19 providing moneys to:

20 (1) meet the Blue Acres costs to the State for the acquisition of
21 lands for a Blue Acres project; or

22 (2) provide grants, pursuant to the provisions of subsection c. of
23 this section, to assist a qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization
24 in meeting the Blue Acres costs for the acquisition of lands for a
25 Blue Acres project.

26 c. (1) A grant by the State for lands to be acquired by a
27 qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization for a Blue Acres
28 project may include up to 50 percent of the Blue Acres cost of
29 acquisition of the lands by the qualifying tax exempt nonprofit
30 organization.

31 (2) A qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization shall not use
32 as its matching share of the Blue Acres cost of acquisition of lands
33 for a Blue Acres project any constitutionally dedicated moneys, as
34 defined pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-3), or
35 any grant moneys obtained from a Green Acres bond act.

36 (3) To qualify to receive a grant from the Preserve New Jersey
37 Blue Acres Fund, the board of directors or governing body of the
38 applying tax exempt nonprofit organization shall:

39 (a) demonstrate to the commissioner that the organization
40 qualifies as a charitable conservancy for the purposes of P.L.1979,
41 c.378 (C.13:8B-1 et seq.);

42 (b) demonstrate that the organization has the resources to match
43 the grant requested;

44 (c) agree to make and keep the lands accessible to the public,
45 unless the commissioner determines that public accessibility would
46 be detrimental to the lands or any natural resources associated
47 therewith;

1 (d) agree not to convey the lands except to the federal
2 government, the State, a local government unit, or another
3 qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization, for recreation and
4 conservation purposes; and

5 (e) agree to execute and donate to the State at no charge a
6 conservation restriction pursuant to P.L.1979, c.378 (C.13:8B-1 et
7 seq.) on the lands to be acquired with the grant.

8 d. The State shall not use the power of eminent domain in any
9 manner for the acquisition of lands by the State for Blue Acres
10 projects using constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys in whole or
11 in part unless a concurrent resolution approving that use is approved
12 by both Houses of the Legislature; except that, without the need for
13 such a concurrent resolution, the State may use the power of
14 eminent domain to the extent necessary to establish a value for
15 lands to be acquired from a willing seller by the State for recreation
16 and conservation purposes, as part of a Blue Acres project, using
17 constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys in whole or in part.

18 e. Moneys in the fund shall not be expended except in
19 accordance with appropriations from the fund made by law. Any
20 act appropriating moneys from the Preserve New Jersey Blue Acres
21 Fund shall identify the particular project or projects to be funded by
22 the moneys, and any expenditure for a project for which the
23 location is not identified by municipality and county in the
24 appropriation shall require the approval of the Joint Budget
25 Oversight Committee, or its successor.

26 f. Unexpended moneys due to project withdrawals,
27 cancellations, or cost savings shall be returned to the fund to be
28 used for the purposes of the fund.

29 g. Of the amount authorized pursuant to this section, not more
30 than five percent shall be utilized for organizational, administrative
31 and other work and services, including salaries, equipment and
32 materials necessary to administer the applicable provisions of this
33 act.

34
35 8. (New section) a. The State Treasurer shall establish a fund
36 to be known as the "Preserve New Jersey Farmland Preservation
37 Fund" and shall deposit all moneys received pursuant to subsection
38 c. of section 5 of this act and any other moneys appropriated by law
39 for deposit into the fund.

40 Moneys in the fund shall be invested in permitted investments or
41 shall be held in interest-bearing accounts in those depositories as
42 the State Treasurer may select, and may be invested and reinvested
43 in permitted investments or as other trust funds in the custody of the
44 State Treasurer in the manner provided by law. All interest or other
45 income or earnings derived from the investment or reinvestment of
46 moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund.

47 b. (1) The moneys in the fund are specifically dedicated and
48 shall be used for the same purposes as those set forth in section 37

1 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-37) and as provided in paragraph (2)
2 of this subsection.

3 (2) Of the moneys deposited into the Preserve New Jersey
4 Farmland Preservation Fund each year, 3 percent shall be allocated
5 by the committee on an annual basis for stewardship activities.

6 c. Moneys in the fund shall not be expended except in
7 accordance with appropriations from the fund made by law. Any
8 act appropriating moneys from the Preserve New Jersey Farmland
9 Preservation Fund shall identify any particular project or projects to
10 be funded by the moneys, and any expenditure for a project for
11 which the location is not identified by municipality and county in
12 the appropriation shall require the approval of the Joint Budget
13 Oversight Committee, or its successor, except as permitted
14 otherwise in accordance with the same exceptions as those specified
15 in paragraph (2) of subsection b. of section 23 of P.L.1999, c.152
16 (C.13:8C-23).

17 d. Unexpended moneys due to project withdrawals,
18 cancellations, or cost savings shall be returned to the fund.

19 e. Of the amount authorized pursuant to this section, not more
20 than five percent shall be utilized for organizational, administrative
21 and other work and services, including salaries, equipment and
22 materials necessary to administer the applicable provisions of this
23 act.
24

25 9. (New section) a. The State Treasurer shall establish a fund
26 to be known as the "Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation
27 Fund" and shall deposit all moneys received pursuant to subsection
28 d. of section 5 of this act and any other moneys appropriated by law
29 for deposit into the fund.

30 Moneys in the fund shall be invested in permitted investments or
31 shall be held in interest-bearing accounts in those depositories as
32 the State Treasurer may select, and may be invested and reinvested
33 in permitted investments or as other trust funds in the custody of the
34 State Treasurer in the manner provided by law. All interest or other
35 income or earnings derived from the investment or reinvestment of
36 moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund.

37 b. The moneys in the fund are specifically dedicated and shall
38 be used for the same purposes as those set forth in section 41 of
39 P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-41), and for emergency intervention and
40 the acquisition of historic preservation easements.

41 c. Moneys in the fund shall not be expended except in
42 accordance with appropriations from the fund made by law. Any
43 act appropriating moneys from the Preserve New Jersey Historic
44 Preservation Fund shall identify any particular project or projects to
45 be funded by the moneys, and any expenditure for a project for
46 which the location is not identified by municipality and county in
47 the appropriation shall require the approval of the Joint Budget
48 Oversight Committee, or its successor.

1 d. Unexpended moneys due to project withdrawals,
2 cancellations, or cost savings shall be returned to the fund.

3 e. Of the amount authorized pursuant to this section, not more
4 than five percent shall be utilized for organizational, administrative
5 and other work and services, including salaries, equipment and
6 materials necessary to administer the applicable provisions of this
7 act.

8
9 10. (New section) a. Notwithstanding the provisions of
10 subparagraph (b) of paragraph (2) of subsection a. of section 27 of
11 P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-27) to the contrary, a grant by the State
12 for lands acquired or developed for recreation and conservation
13 purposes by a local government unit in a municipality eligible to
14 receive State aid pursuant to P.L.1978, c.14 (C.52:27D-178 et seq.)
15 shall be for 75 percent of the cost of acquisition or development of
16 the lands by the local government unit, except that the department
17 may authorize an increase in the State's share of the cost up to 100
18 percent of the allowable funding cap established by the department
19 upon a demonstration of special need or exceptional circumstances.

20 b. A local government unit or a qualifying tax exempt
21 nonprofit organization may use a grant or loan received pursuant to
22 this act for recreation and conservation purposes for the
23 construction of a community garden, provided that public access to
24 the lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes is not
25 limited by the community garden.

26
27 11. (New section) Lands acquired or developed by the State, a
28 local government unit, or a qualifying tax exempt nonprofit
29 organization for recreation and conservation purposes using
30 constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys shall not be conveyed,
31 disposed of, or diverted to a use for other than recreation and
32 conservation purposes without complying with the provisions of
33 sections 31 through 35 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-31 through
34 C.13:8C-35), as appropriate, and any other applicable law.

35
36 12. (New section) A local government unit that receives a grant
37 or loan for recreation and conservation purposes pursuant to this act
38 shall satisfactorily operate and maintain the lands acquired or
39 developed pursuant to the conditions of the agreement between the
40 local government unit and the department when the grant or loan is
41 made. In the event that the local government unit cannot or will not
42 correct deficiencies in the operation and maintenance within a
43 reasonable time period, the commissioner may require the
44 repayment of all or a portion of the grant or loan amount received
45 by the local government unit.

46
47 13. (New section) a. At least once every two years, the
48 Department of Environmental Protection, the State Agriculture

1 Development Committee, and the New Jersey Historic Trust shall
2 each submit to the Garden State Preservation Trust a list of projects
3 recommended to receive funding pursuant to this act. Except as
4 otherwise provided by this act, such funding recommendations shall
5 be based upon the same respective priority systems, ranking
6 criteria, and funding policies as those established pursuant to
7 sections 23, 24, 26, 27, and 37 through 42 of P.L.1999, c.152
8 (C.13:8C-23, C.13:8C-24, C.13:8C-26, C.13:8C-27, and C.13:8C-
9 37 through C.13:8C-42), section 7 of P.L.2005, c.178 (C.13:8C-
10 38.1), and sections 1 and 2 of P.L.2001, c.405 (C.13:8C-40.1 and
11 C.13:8C-40.2), and any rules or regulations adopted pursuant to
12 thereto.

13 b. The Garden State Preservation Trust shall review the project
14 lists submitted pursuant to subsection a. of this section, and prepare,
15 and submit to the Governor and to the President of the Senate and
16 the Speaker of the General Assembly for introduction in the
17 Legislature, proposed legislation appropriating moneys pursuant to
18 this act to fund projects on any such list. The Legislature may
19 approve one or more appropriation bills containing a project list or
20 lists submitted by the Garden State Preservation Trust pursuant to
21 this subsection.

22

23 14. (New section) Within one year after the date of enactment of
24 this act, and biennially thereafter, the Garden State Preservation
25 Trust, after consultation with Department of Environmental
26 Protection, the State Agriculture Development Committee, and the
27 New Jersey Historic Trust shall submit to the Governor and the
28 Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-
29 19.1), a written report, which shall:

30 a. Describe the progress being made with respect to the
31 acquisition and development of lands for recreation and
32 conservation purposes, including lands that have incurred flood or
33 storm damage or are likely to do so, or that may buffer or protect
34 other properties from flood or storm damage, the preservation of
35 farmland, and the preservation of historic properties, and provide
36 recommendations with respect to any legislative, administrative, or
37 local action that may be required to enable the Department of
38 Environmental Protection, the State Agriculture Development
39 Committee, and the New Jersey Historic Trust to meet their goals
40 and objectives;

41 b. Tabulate, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, the
42 total acreage for the entire State, and the acreage in each county and
43 municipality, of lands acquired for recreation and conservation
44 purposes, including lands that protect water supplies and lands that
45 have incurred flood or storm damage or are likely to do so, or that
46 may buffer or protect other properties from flood or storm damage,
47 using (1) funding provided by this act, and (2) any other funding
48 provided for such purposes;

- 1 c. Tabulate, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, the
2 total acreage for the entire State, and the acreage in each county and
3 municipality, of farmland preserved for farmland preservation
4 purposes using (1) funding provided by this act, and (2) any other
5 funding provided for such purposes;
- 6 d. Tabulate, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, the
7 total acreage for the entire State, and the acreage in each county and
8 municipality, of any donations of land for recreation and
9 conservation purposes or farmland preservation purposes;
- 10 e. List, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, and by
11 location by county and municipality, all stewardship activities
12 funded pursuant to subsection e. of section 6 of this act and
13 paragraph (2) of subsection b. of section 8 of this act;
- 14 f. List, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, and by
15 project name, project sponsor, and location by county and
16 municipality, all historic preservation projects, including emergency
17 intervention and the acquisition of historic preservation easements,
18 funded with constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys in whole or in
19 part;
- 20 g. Indicate those areas of the State where, as designated by the
21 Department of Environmental Protection in the Open Space Master
22 Plan prepared pursuant to section 5 of P.L.2002, c.76 (C.13:8C-
23 25.1), the acquisition and development of lands by the State for
24 recreation and conservation purposes, including lands that have
25 incurred flood or storm damage or are likely to do so, or that may
26 buffer or protect other properties from flood or storm damage, is
27 planned or is most likely to occur, and those areas of the State
28 where there is a need to protect water resources, including the
29 identification of lands where protection is needed to assure
30 adequate quality and quantity of drinking water supplies in times of
31 drought, indicate those areas of the State where the allocation of
32 constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys for farmland preservation
33 purposes is planned or is most likely to occur, and provide a
34 proposed schedule and expenditure plan for those acquisitions,
35 developments, and allocations, for the next reporting period, which
36 shall include an explanation of how those acquisitions,
37 developments, and allocations will be distributed throughout all
38 geographic regions of the State to the maximum extent practicable
39 and feasible;
- 40 h. List any surplus real property owned by the State or an
41 independent authority of the State that may be utilizable for
42 recreation and conservation purposes or farmland preservation
43 purposes, and indicate what action has been or must be taken to
44 effect a conveyance of those lands to the department, the
45 committee, local government units, qualifying tax exempt nonprofit
46 organizations, or other entities or persons so that the lands may be
47 preserved and used for those purposes;

1 i. List, for the reporting period, all projects for which
2 applications for funding under the Green Acres, Blue Acres,
3 farmland preservation, and historic preservation programs were
4 received but not funded with constitutionally dedicated CBT
5 moneys or other funds during the reporting period, and the reason
6 or reasons why those projects were not funded;

7 j. Tabulate, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, the
8 total acreage for the entire State, and the acreage in each county and
9 municipality, of lands acquired for recreation and conservation
10 purposes that protect water resources and that have incurred flood
11 or storm damage or are likely to do so, or that may buffer or protect
12 other properties from flood or storm damage; and

13 k. Describe any other information or statistics necessary to
14 document the expenditure of funds pursuant to this act in
15 conjunction with the expenditure of funds pursuant to P.L.1999,
16 c.152 (C.13:8C-1 et al.) and any Green Acres bond act.

17

18 15. (New section) a. The Department of Environmental
19 Protection, the State Agriculture Development Committee, the New
20 Jersey Historic Trust, and the Department of the Treasury shall each
21 adopt, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968,
22 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), such rules and regulations as may be
23 necessary to implement and carry out the goals and objectives of
24 this act.

25 b. Notwithstanding the provisions of any law to the contrary,
26 any rules and regulations of the Department of Environmental
27 Protection, the State Agriculture Development Committee, the New
28 Jersey Historic Trust, and the Department of the Treasury that have
29 been adopted pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act" and
30 are in effect as of the date of enactment of this act, that are not
31 inconsistent with the provisions of this act, and that pertain to the
32 Green Acres, Blue Acres, farmland preservation, and historic
33 preservation programs continued pursuant to this act, shall continue
34 in effect until amended or supplemented and readopted as necessary
35 to reflect the provisions and requirements of this act.

36

37 16. Section 24 of P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-24) is amended to
38 read as follows:

39 24. a. (1) There is established in the Department of
40 Environmental Protection the Office of Green Acres. The
41 commissioner may appoint an administrator or director who shall
42 supervise the office, and the department may employ such other
43 personnel and staff as may be required to carry out the duties and
44 responsibilities of the department and the office pursuant to **[this**
45 **act]** P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-1 et al.) and P.L. , c. (C.)
46 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), all without regard to
47 the provisions of Title 11A, Civil Service, of the New Jersey
48 Statutes. Persons appointed or employed as provided pursuant to

1 this subsection shall be compensated in a manner similar to other
2 employees in the Executive Branch, and their compensation shall be
3 determined by the Civil Service Commission.

4 (2) The Green Acres Program in the Department of
5 Environmental Protection, together with all of its functions, powers
6 and duties, are continued and transferred to and constituted as the
7 Office of Green Acres in the Department of Environmental
8 Protection. Whenever, in any law, rule, regulation, order, contract,
9 document, judicial or administrative proceeding or otherwise,
10 reference is made to the Green Acres Program, the same shall mean
11 and refer to the Office of Green Acres in the Department of
12 Environmental Protection. This transfer shall be subject to the
13 provisions of the "State Agency Transfer Act," P.L.1971, c.375
14 (C.52:14D-1 et seq.).

15 b. The duties and responsibilities of the office shall be as
16 follows:

17 (1) Administer all provisions of **[this act]** P.L.1999, c.152
18 (C.13:8C-1 et al.) and P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
19 Legislature as this bill) pertaining to funding the acquisition and
20 development of lands for recreation and conservation purposes as
21 authorized pursuant to Article VIII, Section II, paragraph 6 and
22 paragraph 7 of the State Constitution;

23 (2) Continue to administer all grant and loan programs for the
24 acquisition and development of lands for recreation and
25 conservation purposes, including the Green Trust, established or
26 funded for those purposes pursuant to: P.L.1961, c.45 (C.13:8A-1
27 et seq.); P.L.1971, c.419 (C.13:8A-19 et seq.); P.L.1975, c.155
28 (C.13:8A-35 et seq.); or any Green Acres bond act; and

29 (3) Adopt, with the approval of the commissioner and pursuant
30 to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-
31 1 et seq.), rules and regulations:

32 (a) establishing application procedures for grants and loans for
33 the acquisition and development of lands for recreation and
34 conservation purposes, criteria and policies for the evaluation and
35 priority ranking of projects for eligibility to receive funding for
36 recreation and conservation purposes using constitutionally
37 dedicated moneys pursuant to P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-1 et al.) or
38 constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys pursuant to
39 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),
40 any conditions that may be placed on the award of a grant or loan
41 for recreation and conservation purposes pursuant to **[this act]**
42 P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-1 et al.) or P.L. , c. (C. .)
43 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), and any restrictions
44 that may be placed on the use of lands acquired or developed with a
45 grant or loan for recreation and conservation purposes pursuant to
46 **[this act]** P.L.1999, c.152 or P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
47 before the Legislature as this bill) . The criteria and policies
48 established pursuant to this subparagraph for the evaluation and

1 priority ranking of projects for eligibility to receive funding for
2 recreation and conservation purposes using constitutionally
3 dedicated moneys pursuant to P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-1 et al.) or
4 constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys pursuant to
5 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)
6 may be based upon, but need not be limited to, such factors as:
7 protection of the environment, natural resources, water resources,
8 watersheds, aquifers, wetlands, floodplains and flood-prone areas,
9 stream corridors, beaches and coastal resources, forests and
10 grasslands, scenic views, biodiversity, habitat for wildlife, rare,
11 threatened, or endangered species, and plants; vernal habitat; degree
12 of likelihood of development; promotion of greenways; provision
13 for recreational access and use; protection of geologic, historic,
14 archaeological, and cultural resources; relative cost; parcel size; and
15 degree of public support; and

16 (b) addressing any other matters deemed necessary to implement
17 and carry out the goals and objectives of Article VIII, Section II,
18 paragraph 6 and paragraph 7 of the State Constitution and [this act]
19 P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-1 et al.) and P.L. , c. (C.)
20 (pending before the Legislature as this bill) with respect to the
21 acquisition and development of lands for recreation and
22 conservation purposes , including the acquisition of lands for
23 recreation and conservation purposes that have been damaged by, or
24 may be prone to incurring damage caused by, storms or storm-
25 related flooding, or that may buffer or protect other lands from such
26 damage ; and

27 (4) Establishing criteria and policies for the evaluation and
28 priority ranking of State projects to acquire and develop lands for
29 recreation and conservation purposes using constitutionally
30 dedicated moneys pursuant to P.L.1999, c.152 (C.13:8C-1 et al.) or
31 constitutionally dedicated CBT moneys pursuant to
32 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) ,
33 which criteria and policies may be based upon, but need not be
34 limited to, such factors as: protection of the environment, natural
35 resources, water resources, watersheds, aquifers, wetlands,
36 floodplains and flood-prone areas, stream corridors, beaches and
37 coastal resources, forests and grasslands, scenic views, biodiversity,
38 habitat for wildlife, rare, threatened, or endangered species, and
39 plants; vernal habitat; degree of likelihood of development;
40 promotion of greenways; provision for recreational access and use;
41 protection of geologic, historic, archaeological, and cultural
42 resources; relative cost; parcel size; and degree of public support.

43 (cf: P.L.2008, c.29, s.114)

44

45 17. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This bill would implement, for State fiscal year 2016 through State fiscal year 2019, the constitutional dedication of Corporation Business Tax (CBT) revenues for open space, farmland, and historic preservation. Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 84 (SCS) of 2014, or “Ballot Question No. 2,” presented to, and approved by, the voters of the State on November 4, 2014, amended the New Jersey Constitution to dedicate four percent of CBT revenues for open space, farmland, and historic preservation, water programs, public and private site remediation, and underground storage tank programs for fiscal years 2016 through 2019, and further increased the annual dedication for certain environmental programs from four percent to six percent commencing in fiscal year 2020 and thereafter.

Specifically with regard to open space, farmland, and historic preservation, for fiscal year 2016 through fiscal year 2019, of the four percent CBT dedication, the State Constitution dedicates annually 71 percent for: (1) providing funding, including loans or grants, for the preservation, including acquisition, development, and stewardship, of lands for recreation and conservation purposes, including lands that protect water supplies and lands that have incurred flood or storm damage or are likely to do so, or that may buffer or protect other properties from flood or storm damage (i.e., Green Acres and Blue Acres); (2) providing funding, including loans or grants, for the preservation and stewardship of land for agricultural or horticultural use and production (i.e., farmland preservation); (3) providing funding, including loans or grants, for historic preservation; and (4) paying administrative costs associated with each of those efforts. Commencing July 1, 2019 (i.e., for State fiscal year 2020 and thereafter), of the six percent of the CBT revenue to be dedicated annually for certain environmental programs, 78 percent would be dedicated for the above-listed four purposes.

The Constitution also dedicates money received from leases and conveyances of State open space lands. Under this bill, each State park, forest, or wildlife management area would receive an amount equal to the amount of revenue annually derived from leases or conveyances of lands at that State park, forest, or wildlife management area, as appropriate, to be used for recreation and conservation purposes at that State park, forest, or wildlife management area.

For fiscal year 2016 through and including fiscal year 2019, the above-described CBT dedicated revenues would be allocated as follows:

(1) 64 percent would be used for acquiring and developing lands for public recreation and conservation purposes, including lands that protect water supplies, under the Green Acres program;

- 1 (2) 4 percent would be used for the Blue Acres program;
2 (3) 29 percent would be used for farmland preservation
3 purposes; and
4 (4) 3 percent would be used for historic preservation purposes.

5 A maximum of 5 percent each year would be permitted to be
6 used for administrative costs associated with implementing each of
7 these four programs.

8 Of the monies allocated for the Green Acres program and the
9 farmland preservation program, the bill also allocates funding for
10 stewardship activities. The bill defines “stewardship activity” to
11 mean “an activity, which is beyond routine operations and
12 maintenance, undertaken by the State, a local government unit, or a
13 qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization to repair, restore, or
14 improve lands acquired or developed for recreation and
15 conservation purposes or acquired for farmland preservation
16 purposes for the purpose of enhancing or protecting those lands for
17 recreation and conservation purposes or farmland preservation
18 purposes.”

19 Of the 64 percent allocated each year for the Green Acres
20 program: 55 percent would be used for State open space acquisition
21 and development projects; 38 percent would be used for grants and
22 loans to fund local government open space acquisition and
23 development projects; and 7 percent would be used for grants to
24 fund open space acquisition and development projects undertaken
25 by qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organizations. Of the funding
26 for State open space acquisition and development projects: 40
27 percent would be used for acquisition projects and 60 percent would
28 be used for development projects. Further, of the funding for State
29 open space development projects, 22 percent would be used for
30 stewardship activities undertaken on lands administered by the
31 Division of Fish and Wildlife and 22 percent would be used for
32 stewardship activities undertaken on lands administered by the
33 Division of Parks and Forestry. Of the funding allocated for local
34 open space acquisition and development projects, 2 percent would
35 be used to fund stewardship activities. Of the allocated funding for
36 open space acquisition and development projects by qualifying tax
37 exempt nonprofit organizations, 11 percent would be used to fund
38 stewardship activities.

39 “Blue Acres” is the term used to refer to properties that have
40 been damaged by storms or storm-related flooding, that appear
41 likely to incur such damage, or that may buffer or protect other
42 lands from such damage. Structures on a purchased property are
43 demolished, the debris is removed, and the land is preserved as
44 open space. The Blue Acres Program is administered by the DEP’s
45 Green Acres Program. Under the bill, funding under the Blue Acres
46 Program would be available for (1) acquisition by the State of Blue
47 Acres properties, or (2) State grants to assist qualifying tax exempt
48 nonprofits in the acquisition of Blue Acres properties. The State

1 would be prohibited from using eminent domain to acquire land for
2 Blue Acres projects, except with the approval of the Legislature by
3 adoption of a concurrent resolution to that effect. However, if
4 needed, eminent domain proceedings could be employed by the
5 State for the purpose only of establishing value.

6 This bill continues the State's existing open space, farmland, and
7 historic preservation programs. It is based on the provisions of the
8 "Garden State Preservation Trust Act" (GSPTA), as well as the
9 "Green Acres, Water Supply and Floodplain Protection, and
10 Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 2009" (P.L.2009,
11 c.117) and the "Green Acres, Farmland, Blue Acres, and Historic
12 Preservation Bond Act of 2007" (P.L.2007, c.119) and, generally,
13 defines relevant terms in the same manner as the GSPTA and
14 continues the respective priority systems, ranking criteria, and
15 funding policies set forth in the GSPTA, except as otherwise
16 specified in the bill.

17 For the Green Acres Program, the bill provides that an urban aid
18 municipality may receive a grant by the State for the acquisition or
19 development of lands for recreation and conservation purposes for
20 75 percent of the cost of acquisition or development of the lands by
21 the local government unit, and this amount may be increased by the
22 DEP up to 100 percent of the allowable funding cap upon a
23 demonstration of special need or exceptional circumstances. Under
24 current law, an urban aid municipality may receive a grant for 50
25 percent of the cost of the project, with the possibility of this amount
26 being increased to a maximum of 75 percent (up to the allowable
27 cap). In addition, the bill provides that a local government unit or a
28 qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization may use a grant or
29 loan for recreation and conservation purposes for the construction
30 of a community garden.

31 For the historic preservation program, the bill provides that
32 historic preservation funds may also be used for emergency
33 intervention and the acquisition of historic property easements. The
34 bill defines "emergency intervention" to mean an immediate
35 assessment or capital improvement necessary to protect or stabilize
36 the structural integrity of a historic property.

37 Lastly, the bill provides that the DEP, the State Agriculture
38 Development Committee, and the New Jersey Historic Trust would
39 each, at least once every two years, submit to the Garden State
40 Preservation Trust projects recommended to receive funding under
41 the bill. The Garden State Preservation Trust would then submit the
42 lists of projects to the Legislature for funding in the form of
43 appropriation bills.