ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION AND INDEPENDENT AUTHORITIES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

# ASSEMBLY, No. 1521

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 10, 2020

The Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1521.

As reported, this bill authorizes the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (commission) to issue special State Animal license plates. The license plates are to be designed by the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (chief administrator), in consultation with the Secretary (secretary) of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (department), and feature an emblem that indicates that the horse is the official State Animal of New Jersey.

In addition to the required motor vehicle registration fees, there is an application fee of $50 and an annual renewal fee of $10 for the State Animal license plates. After deducting the costs to implement the plates, the additional fees collected are to be deposited into the "State Animal License Plate Fund." The proceeds of the fund are to be appropriated annually to the department to support any departmental program to support the health and wellbeing of horses and to provide therapeutic riding to individuals with special needs in the State.

The chief administrator is required to annually certify the average cost of producing, issuing, and publicizing the availability of the specialty license plates. If the average cost per plate exceeds $50 in two consecutive fiscal years, the chief administrator may discontinue the State Animal license plate program. The bill also requires that the secretary appoint a liaison to represent the department in all communications with the commission regarding the State Animal license plates.

The bill provides that State or other public funds may not be used by the commission for the initial cost to implement the State Animal license plate program. The bill requires an individual or entity designated by the secretary to contribute non-public monies, not to exceed $25,000, to offset the initial costs to design, produce, issue, and publicize the license plates and for any computer programming necessary to implement the program. The bill authorizes the department to receive funds from private sources to be used to offset the initial costs.

The chief administrator is not required to design, produce, issue, or publicize the availability of the State Animal license plates, or make any necessary programming changes, until: (1) an individual or entity designated by the secretary has provided the commission with the money necessary to offset the initial costs incurred by the commission in establishing the State Animal license plate program; and (2) the secretary, or the secretary's designee, has provided the commission with a minimum of 500 completed applications for the State Animal license plates, upon the availability for purchase of those license plates.

The provisions of the bill will remain inoperative until the appropriate applications and fees required to offset the initial costs incurred by the commission are provided by the department's designee. The bill expires after 12 months if sufficient applications and fees to offset the initial costs are not received.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.