

ASSEMBLY AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2775

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 13, 2020

The Assembly Agriculture Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2775.

As amended, this bill amends current law to make permanent the pilot program allowing special occasion events to be conducted at wineries on preserved farmland. The bill, as amended, also revises the reporting requirement under the law to require on-going biennial reports to the Governor and the Legislature.

The pilot program was created by P.L.2014, c.16 (C.4:1C-32.7 et seq.). It was established for 44 months and was scheduled to expire on March 1, 2018. The original enactment did not contain reporting requirements. The pilot program was extended for two additional years by the enactment of P.L.2018, c.30. The 2018 law extending the pilot program was effective on May 30, 2018 and was made retroactive to March 1, 2018 to cover the gap period.

The 2018 enactment also required:

(1) County agricultural development boards (CADB) to submit annual reports which include findings that summarize the activities of wineries on preserved farmland in the county of the board's jurisdiction and make recommendations for the pilot program; and

(2) The State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) to submit interim and final reports that review the implementation and operation of the pilot program, summarize the findings and recommendations of the annual reports prepared by the CADBs, and make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.

The bill, as amended, continues the program beyond its May 30, 2020 expiration and makes the program permanent thereafter. Under the provisions of the bill, as amended, the CADBs would continue to submit annual reports and the SADC would be required to submit biennial reports. The bill, as amended, also will be retroactive, if appropriate, to May 30, 2020.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments make technical and clarifying corrections to the bill.