

ASSEMBLY, No. 2947

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman PARKER SPACE

District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

SYNOPSIS

Directs DEP to designate areas in each State park and forest for construction of bat houses.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** concerning the construction of bat houses in State parks
2 and forests, and supplementing P.L.1983, c.324 (C.13:1L-1 et
3 seq.).

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

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8 1. a. The Commissioner of Environmental Protection shall
9 designate in, and include the designation in the master plan and
10 management plan for, each State park and forest at least one area of
11 the State park or forest in which a bat house shall be constructed
12 and maintained. The commissioner shall consult with experts on
13 bats, nonprofit organizations and other entities knowledgeable
14 about bats, and any other appropriate persons or entities to ensure
15 the proper location, construction, and maintenance of each bat
16 house, with minimal threat from fire, danger to the public, or impact
17 on the public's use and enjoyment of the State park or forest.

18 b. The Division of Parks and Forestry in the Department of
19 Environmental Protection shall post signs, as appropriate, notifying
20 the public of the perimeters of each designated bat house area and
21 its purpose, and take any other cautionary measures necessary to
22 avoid destruction of the bat house and injurious interactions
23 between bats and the public in and around each bat house.

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25 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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30 This bill would require the Department of Environmental
31 Protection to designate at least one area in each State park and
32 forest in which a bat house would be constructed and maintained.

33 New Jersey is home to nine species of bats, all of which are
34 protected by "The Endangered and Nongame Species Conservation
35 Act." Six species, including the Indiana bat – designated as a State
36 and federal endangered species – are year-round residents, and three
37 species are migratory.

38 Bats are important indicators of a healthy environment. Since
39 they are particularly vulnerable to pollution and pesticides, the
40 presence or absence of bats can provide scientists with information
41 on the overall health of the local environment. New Jersey's bat
42 species are insectivorous and can consume thousands of insects in a
43 single night, helping to reduce agricultural crop pests, mosquitos,
44 and the use of pesticides. Accordingly, the State should do as much
45 as possible to facilitate increases in the populations of all bat
46 species in the State. Building bat houses on State lands is one such
47 way.