ASSEMBLY AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4233

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 22, 2020

The Assembly Agriculture Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4233.

This bill would amend current law concerning penalties for trespass and vandalism on agricultural and horticultural lands. Specifically, this bill would increase the penalty for trespass and vandalism on agricultural and horticultural lands when the damage incurred by the landowner exceeds $10,000.

Under current law, it is a criminal offense to knowingly or recklessly damage or injure any tangible property, including, but not limited to, any fence, building, feedstocks, crops, live trees, or any domestic animals located on agricultural or horticultural lands. In addition, current law provides a civil penalty of at least $1,000 for a person who engages in such an offense.

Under this bill, the minimum civil penalty would be increased from $1,000 to $2,500 if the court determines that the damages sustained from trespass upon the agricultural or horticultural land exceed $10,000. This increased civil penalty would be in addition to any other applicable fines, penalties, or restitution that may be assessed pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1983, c.522 (C.2C:18-6) or any other law.