

ASSEMBLY AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5409

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 9, 2021

The Assembly Agriculture Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5409.

This bill would direct the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to establish a grant program for local government units to support the development and maintenance of pollinator friendly community gardens in the State, in order to provide readily available sources of fresh, healthy foods to communities that may lack easy access to affordable fruits and vegetables, and support the State's population of pollinating animals. The local government unit would be required to partner with a nonprofit organization in order to develop and maintain the community garden. Implementation of the grant program would be subject to a future appropriation by the Legislature, and the bill directs the DEP Commissioner to include a request for funds in the DEP annual budget request.

The bill also requires a grant recipient report to the DEP information concerning the use of the grant. During each year that a grant is awarded, the DEP is required to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature on the effectiveness of the grant program.