

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 142

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Memorializes U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide funding for gypsy moth suppression efforts.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** memorializing the United States
2 Department of Agriculture to provide financial support for New
3 Jersey's Gypsy Moth Suppression Program.
4

5 **WHEREAS**, The gypsy moth, which feeds on hardwood and other trees
6 and causes extreme defoliation, is the most destructive insect pest in
7 New Jersey's forests, and because the defoliation caused by gypsy
8 moths often leads to the death of both weakened and healthy trees,
9 any increase in the State's gypsy moth population poses a serious
10 threat to the viability of New Jersey's woodland resources; and

11 **WHEREAS**, As recognized by the New Jersey Department of
12 Agriculture (NJDOA), even when the number of gypsy moths in the
13 State is low, the State must remain vigilant in its undertaking of
14 suppression efforts, since gypsy moth populations can quickly
15 explode, and become unmanageable, under certain conditions; and

16 **WHEREAS**, The United States Department of Agriculture (USDOA)
17 has recognized that the severity of gypsy moth infestations is a
18 cyclical phenomenon, and while there may be periods of time –
19 spanning a course of several years – during which forests may
20 experience very little visible defoliation due to a sparse gypsy moth
21 population, these periods of reprieve are generally followed by two
22 to four year periods of visible and significant defoliation resulting
23 from increases in gypsy moth population density; and

24 **WHEREAS**, The last cyclical period of visible defoliation in the State
25 appears to have occurred during the four-year period from 2004 to
26 2008, when, according to the NJDOA, defoliation from the gypsy
27 moth steadily increased – encompassing 6,500 acres in 2004,
28 44,000 acres in 2005, 125,000 acres in 2006, more than 320,000
29 acres in 2007, and nearly 340,000 acres in 2008; and

30 **WHEREAS**, As recognized by the NJDOA, this period of visible
31 defoliation in the State directly coincided with a steady increase in
32 the gypsy moth population, which lasted from 2004 to 2008; and

33 **WHEREAS**, Although the State's gypsy moth population experienced a
34 collapse in 2009, resulting in a significant reduction, over
35 subsequent years, in the number of acres suffering from defoliation
36 in the State – particularly, a reduction from approximately 340,000
37 acres in 2008 to 92,000 acres in 2009 to 4,000 acres in 2010 to
38 1,300 acres in 2011 and to just over 1,000 acres in 2012 – it appears
39 that the gypsy moth population is, once again, beginning to swell in
40 numbers; and

41 **WHEREAS**, The NJDOA has concluded, based on an aerial survey
42 conducted in July 2013, that there was a nearly three-fold increase
43 in the amount of acreage defoliated by gypsy moth activity in the
44 State during the preceding year; and

45 **WHEREAS**, Although the NJDOA implements a voluntary gypsy moth
46 suppression program in which municipalities may choose to take
47 part, a participating municipality must fund the program unless

1 financial support is provided by the State, with the assistance of the
2 USDOA; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Although the USDOA has, in prior years, provided
4 financial aid to the State, in an amount of up to 50 percent of the
5 costs associated with gypsy moth control, the provision of federal
6 funding ceased in 2010, following the 2009 collapse of the State's
7 gypsy moth population; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Given the current financial situation in the State and most
9 of its municipalities, it is unlikely that the proper funding will be
10 allocated for gypsy moth suppression efforts unless the United
11 States Department of Agriculture assists in this effort; now,
12 therefore,

13
14 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
15 Jersey:

16
17 1. The United States Department of Agriculture is respectfully
18 memorialized to provide funding for the New Jersey Gypsy Moth
19 Suppression Program in order to aid municipalities in fighting the
20 devastating effects of this forest pest.

21
22 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
23 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
24 Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Chief
25 of the Natural Resources Conservation Service of that department,
26 and the Secretary of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

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29 **STATEMENT**

30

31 This resolution memorializes the United States Department of
32 Agriculture (USDOA) to provide funding for the New Jersey Gypsy
33 Moth Suppression Program.

34 The gypsy moth is the most destructive insect pest to infest New
35 Jersey's forests, feeding on hardwood and other trees and causing
36 extreme defoliation, which leads to the death of both weakened and
37 healthy trees. The USDOA has recognized that the severity of
38 gypsy moth infestations is a cyclical phenomenon, and while there
39 may be periods of time – spanning a course of several years –
40 during which forests may experience very little visible defoliation
41 (due to a sparse gypsy moth population), these periods of reprieve
42 are generally followed by two to four year periods of visible and
43 significant defoliation resulting from increases in gypsy moth
44 population density.

45 The last cyclical period of visible defoliation in the State appears
46 to have occurred during the four-year period from 2004 to 2008,
47 during which time there were steady increases in both the
48 population of gypsy moths, and the amount of acreage defoliated

1 thereby. Although the State's gypsy moth population experienced a
2 collapse in 2009, which resulted in a significant reduction, over
3 subsequent years, in the number of acres suffering from defoliation
4 in the State, it appears that the gypsy moth population is, once
5 again, beginning to rise. In particular, the NJDOA concluded,
6 based on an aerial survey conducted in July 2013, that there was a
7 nearly three-fold increase in the amount of acreage defoliated by
8 gypsy moth activity in the State during the preceding year.

9 Under the State's Gypsy Moth Suppression Program, a
10 participating municipality must provide the funds necessary to
11 engage in suppression efforts, unless financial support is provided
12 by the State, with the assistance of the USDOA. Although the
13 USDOA, in prior years, has provided financial aid to the State, in
14 an amount of up to 50 percent of the costs associated with gypsy
15 moth control, this federal funding ceased in 2010, following the
16 2009 collapse of the gypsy moth population. This resolution,
17 therefore, urges the USDOA to, once again, provide appropriate
18 federal funding for these essential suppression measures, in order to
19 assist municipalities in preventing the devastating effects of this
20 forest pest.