SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1607

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: AUGUST 10, 2020

The Senate Transportation Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1607.

As reported, this bill authorizes the Chief Administrator (chief administrator) of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) to issue special license plates for sea turtle recovery.

In addition to the registration number and other markings or identification otherwise prescribed by law, the license plate is to display appropriate words or a slogan indicating support for the rehabilitation, preservation, and conservation of sea turtles. The design of the license plate is to be chosen by the chief administrator, in consultation with Sea Turtle Recovery, Inc. (STR).

In addition to the required motor vehicle registration fees, there is an application fee of $50 and an annual renewal fee of $10 for the license plates. After deducting the costs to implement the plates, the additional fees collected are to be deposited into the "Sea Turtle Recovery License Plate Fund," the proceeds of which are to be appropriated annually to STR.

The chief administrator is required to annually certify the average cost of producing, issuing, and publicizing the availability of the specialty license plates. If the average cost per plate exceeds $50 in two consecutive fiscal years, the chief administrator may discontinue the license plate program. The bill also requires that the executive officer of STR appoint a liaison to represent STR in all communications with the MVC regarding the license plates.

The bill provides that State or other public funds may not be used by the MVC for the initial cost to implement the license plate program. The bill requires STR, or an individual or entity designated by STR, to contribute non-public monies, not to exceed $25,000, to offset the initial costs to design, produce, issue, and publicize the license plates and for any computer programming necessary to implement the program. The bill authorizes STR to receive funds from private sources to be used to offset the initial costs.

The MVC is not required to design, produce, issue, or publicize the availability of the license plates, or make any necessary programming changes, until: (1) STR, or an individual or entity designated by STR, has provided the MVC with the money necessary to offset the initial costs incurred by the MVC in

establishing the license plate program; and (2) STR, or its designee, has provided the MVC with a minimum of 500 completed applications for the license plates.

The provisions of the bill will remain inoperative until the first day of the 13th month after the appropriate applications and fees required to offset the initial costs incurred by the MVC are provided by STR or its designee. The bill expires on the last day of the 12th month after enactment if sufficient applications and fees to offset the initial costs are not received.