

SENATE, No. 2596

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 22, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

Senator NILSA I. CRUZ-PEREZ

District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

SYNOPSIS

Appropriates \$5 million in federal funds to Department of Health for grants to farmers for purchase of protective health materials for farm workers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning protective health materials for farm workers,
2 and making an appropriation.

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

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7 1. a. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
8 Department of Health the sum of \$5 million from a portion of those
9 federal block grant funds allocated to the State from the federal
10 “Coronavirus Relief Fund,” established pursuant to the federal
11 “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act,” Pub.L.116-
12 136, for use by the department to provide financial assistance in the
13 form of grants to an owner or operator of a farm for the purchase of
14 personal protection equipment to be provided to farm workers at
15 that farm to protect against the COVID-19 virus. The
16 Commissioner of Health may also, at the commissioner’s discretion,
17 provide grants for the purchase of other items or materials that
18 would improve the health and safety of farm workers during the
19 COVID-19 pandemic.

20 b. The Department of Health shall provide notice on its Internet
21 website of the availability of funding for the purchase of personal
22 protection equipment, or other health and safety items or materials,
23 for farm workers pursuant to this section. An owner or operator of
24 a farm may apply for a grant in the form and manner prescribed by
25 the department.

26 c. As used in this section:

27 “Farm worker” means any employee engaged to labor on a farm
28 in the production, harvesting, and processing of agricultural
29 products, and shall include any employee subject to the provisions
30 of subsection d. of section 5 of P.L.1966, c.113 (C.34:11-56a4).

31 “Personal protection equipment” means equipment, such as
32 gloves and masks, to minimize the spread of disease.

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34 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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39 This bill makes a \$5 million appropriation to the Department of
40 Health from these federal block grant funds allocated to the State
41 from the federal “Coronavirus Relief Fund,” established pursuant to
42 the federal “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
43 (CARES) Act,” Pub.L.116-136, for use by the department to
44 provide grants to farmers for the purchase of personal protection
45 equipment to be provided to farm workers to protect against the
46 COVID-19 virus. The bill also provides the Commissioner of
47 Health the discretion to provide grants for the purchase of items or
48 materials, other than personal protection equipment, that would

1 improve the health and safety of farm workers during the COVID-
2 19 pandemic.
3 Block grant funds distributed to states from the federal
4 “Coronavirus Relief Fund,” are to be used for costs associated with
5 controlling the COVID-19 virus and mitigating the economic
6 damage caused by the pandemic. Because of the rapidity of the
7 spread of COVID-19, an outbreak among farm workers can not only
8 endanger the health, livelihoods, and lives of the workers, but also
9 cause significant immediate disruption of the State’s supply of food
10 and other agricultural products and potentially damage the viability
11 of the agricultural and food processing sectors of the State’s
12 economy. This bill would provide assistance to owners and
13 operators of farms to help ensure that the health of farm workers is
14 protected and at the same time providing that one of the State’s
15 critical industries can continue to function safely during this crisis.