

SENATE, No. 2127

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 26, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator NILSA CRUZ-PEREZ
District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)
Senator ROBERT W. SINGER
District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Extends pilot program authorizing special occasion events at wineries on preserved farmland; implements reporting requirement.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 4/6/2018)

1 AN ACT concerning special occasion events at certain wineries and
2 supplementing P.L.2014, c.16.

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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. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 6 of P.L.2014,
8 c.16 to the contrary, sections 1 through 5 of P.L.2014, c.16 (C.4:1C-
9 32.7 through C.4:1C-32.11) shall be and remain in effect for two
10 years following the enactment of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before
11 the Legislature as this bill), and shall be retroactive to March 1, 2018.

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13 2. a. Each county agriculture development board shall prepare
14 and submit to the Governor and to the Legislature, pursuant to section
15 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), an annual report. Each annual
16 report shall include findings that summarize the activities of wineries
17 on preserved farmland in the county of the board's jurisdiction and
18 make recommendations for the pilot program established pursuant to
19 P.L.2014, c.16 (C.4:1C-32.7 et seq.).

20 b. The State Agriculture Development Committee shall prepare
21 and submit to the Governor and to the Legislature, pursuant to section
22 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1):

23 (1) an interim report, within 30 days following the enactment of
24 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill); and

25 (2) a final report, at least 45 days before the expiration of the pilot
26 program established pursuant to P.L.2014, c.16 (C.4:1C-32.7 et seq.).

27 c. The interim and final reports required pursuant to subsection b.
28 of this section shall review the implementation and operation of the
29 pilot program established pursuant to P.L.2014, c.16 (C.4:1C-32.7 et
30 seq.), summarize the findings and recommendations of the annual
31 reports prepared pursuant to subsection a. of this section, and make
32 recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to amend, extend,
33 or make permanent the program.

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35 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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40 This bill amends current law to continue the pilot program
41 allowing special occasion events that promote agricultural tourism
42 to be conducted at wineries on preserved farmland for an additional
43 two years, at a minimum, and requires periodic reports.

44 Under P.L.2014, c.16 (C.4:1C-32.7 et seq.), special occasion
45 events are only authorized to be conducted at wineries on preserved
46 farmland as part of a pilot program that expires March 1, 2018.
47 This bill extends the pilot program provisions, consistent with the
48 existing requirements established by law, from March 1, 2018 until

1 two years following this bill's enactment. Under the bill, the pilot
2 program would expire no earlier than March 1, 2020, and this
3 extension would prevent any interruption of program operations.

4 This bill amends the law establishing the pilot program to
5 implement reporting requirements. A county agriculture development
6 board (CADB) would prepare and submit annual reports, and the State
7 Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) would prepare and
8 submit an interim and final report concerning the pilot program. The
9 SADC's interim and final reports would include the findings and
10 recommendations of the CADBs' annual reports required to be
11 submitted under the bill, and make recommendations to the Governor
12 and Legislature to amend, extend, or make permanent the program.
13 The interim report would be submitted within 30 days of this bill's
14 enactment, and the final report would be submitted at least 45 days
15 before the expiration of the pilot program. The final report would be
16 submitted before the pilot program's expiration in order to ensure
17 that any program concerns could be considered and addressed
18 before the program ceases to operate.

19 As initially passed in both chambers of the Legislature, with
20 near-unanimous votes, Senate Bill No. 837 of 2014-2015 would
21 have authorized special occasion events that promote agricultural
22 tourism to be conducted at wineries under certain circumstances,
23 regardless of preservation status and without expiration. In
24 response to the Governor's conditional veto, the Legislature
25 adopted changes to Senate Bill No. 837, subsequently enacted as
26 P.L.2014, c.16, which established the 44-month pilot program
27 authorizing a special occasion event to be conducted at a winery on
28 preserved farmland. The Governor's veto message omitted a
29 reporting requirement, and ultimately the program's continuance is
30 now at risk due to its imminent expiration.

31 With the notable increased production of wine and grapes,
32 combined with amplified recognition on the national and global
33 stage for award-winning wines, New Jersey joins the upper echelon
34 of wine-producing states. The full economic impact of New Jersey
35 wine and vineyards in 2016 totaled more than \$232 million,
36 according to "The Economic Impact of New Jersey Wine and
37 Vineyards – 2016," published in December 2017. A key finding of
38 the report indicated that non-wine revenue from weddings and other
39 events resulted in wineries generating \$2.3 million, which is
40 approximately one percent of the \$237 million total revenue
41 generated by wineries in 2016, and far from rivaling the direct wine
42 sales on a winery premises, which amounted to \$25.4 million.
43 Comparatively, in 2011, non-wine revenue generated \$1.5 million
44 of the \$173 million total revenue (roughly 0.09 percent), and was
45 still unmatched by the direct wine sales of \$18.2 million. This
46 research reveals that revenue related to ancillary events conducted
47 at wineries is steadily increasing, benefitting wineries and the
48 tourism industry in the State as a whole. The statistics quell any

1 concerns that the primary function of farms is threatened by, or
2 secondary to, agricultural tourism activities and events that market
3 and advance agricultural output. The report's findings demonstrate
4 the inherent link between agriculture, tourism, and events
5 supporting the economic prosperity of wineries.

6 This bill protects and sustains the agricultural output of farms
7 and supports the work of wineries so they may continue producing
8 high-quality wines and attracting residents and visitors alike to
9 experience their vineyards and spaces as a destination.
10 Accordingly, the bill expands the opportunities for, and likelihood
11 of, people exploring the Garden State and its unique wine regions,
12 which has a positive economic impact on the State as a whole.

13 It is the sponsor's intent to further the progress of the burgeoning
14 wine industry in New Jersey and protect the livelihood of all farms
15 that comprise the State's agricultural industry. It is crucial to avert
16 uncertainty as to whether events scheduled to be conducted at
17 wineries are to remain or be cancelled or rescheduled due to the
18 pilot program's expiration. Eliminating the looming pilot program
19 expiration, by continuing to allow these events, will benefit
20 wineries and farms, agricultural tourism and the State's tourism
21 industry generally, as well as all people who may discover the
22 Garden State and its fruitful agricultural tourism offerings as a
23 result of attending a special occasion event, such as a wedding or
24 other lifetime milestone event. The sponsor wishes to avoid any
25 interruption in the events conducted at wineries that could affect the
26 livelihood of people, like brides, grooms, families, and other
27 celebrants, in addition to all of the jobs and workers who diligently
28 make any event – from harvest festivals to retirement parties – a
29 memorable and cherished one.