

ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT AND SOLID WASTE
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3275

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 14, 2007

The Assembly and Solid Waste Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 3275.

This bill, as amended, would change the membership of the Fish and Game Council. Under this bill, the council would be composed of seven members, of whom two members would be farmers. The seven members would be chosen with due regard to the person's knowledge of and interest in the conservation of fish and wildlife, and without regard for geographic representation of the regions of the State. The seven members would be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. In addition, this bill would require that no member of the council have a direct personal financial interest that might reasonably be expected to impair the person's objectivity or independence of judgment.

Under current law, there are 11 members on the council, chosen with due regard to the person's knowledge of and interest in the conservation of fish and game, as follows: three farmers, recommended by the State agricultural convention to the Governor for appointment; six sportsmen, recommended by the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs to the Governor for appointment; one public member knowledgeable in land use management and soil conservation practices; and the Chairperson of the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee established pursuant "The Endangered and Nongame Species Conservation Act." In addition, the current farmer representatives and sportsmen representatives are chosen with regard to geographic representation of the State, with one farmer representative and two sportsmen representatives chosen from the northern, central, and southern regions of the State.

This bill would also revise the authority of the Fish and Game Council. This bill expand the duties of the council to include: investigating the use of non-lethal alternatives for dealing with wildlife conflicts; exploring eco-tourism opportunities to promote the State's diverse wildlife; and pursuing opportunities to preserve land for wildlife habitat.

In addition, under current law, the Fish and Game Council is authorized to adopt the State Fish and Game Code for the purpose of “providing an adequate and flexible system of protection, propagation, increase, control and conservation of freshwater fish, game birds, game animals, and fur-bearing animals in this State, and for their use and development for public recreation and food supply.” This bill would provide that the code is for the purpose of providing a properly managed and balanced system, and would delete the consideration for use and development of fish and game for public recreation and food supply.

Lastly, the bill makes various technical amendments to the statutory text to update references to the Department of Environmental Protection and the Division of Fish and Wildlife, and to update statutory references.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments to the bill provide that two of the seven members of the council shall be farmers.