

# ASSEMBLY, No. 1812

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman TIM EUSTACE**

**District 38 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**Assemblyman PARKER SPACE**

**District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Designates little brown bat as NJ State Bat.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



A1812 EUSTACE, SPACE

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1 AN ACT designating the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) as the  
2 New Jersey State Bat and supplementing chapter 9A of Title 52  
3 of the Revised Statutes.  
4  
5 WHEREAS, The little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) is one of over  
6 1,200 species of bats in the world; and  
7 WHEREAS, The little brown bat, found mostly in southern Canada and  
8 the northern half of the United States, is one of the most populous  
9 bats in New Jersey, and one of the most likely to come into contact  
10 with humans; and  
11 WHEREAS, The little brown bat has an average wingspan of 11 inches  
12 and measures two to four inches from nose to tail, and despite its  
13 small size, can eat up to 4,500 insects in one night, including moths,  
14 wasps, beetles, gnats, mosquitos, midges, and mayflies, thereby  
15 reducing the need for pesticides and preventing some of the  
16 environmental damage associated with pesticide use; and  
17 WHEREAS, During the spring, summer, and fall, little brown bats in  
18 New Jersey are often found in trees, buildings, or caves, or under  
19 rocks or piles of wood, while during the winter months, they are  
20 most commonly found hibernating in the State's largest known bat  
21 hibernaculum, the Hibernia Mine in Morris County; and  
22 WHEREAS, In recent years, bat population numbers have sharply  
23 declined throughout the State, especially in the Hibernia Mine,  
24 which was once home to nearly 30,000 little brown bats; and  
25 WHEREAS, As of 2015, the little brown bat population in the Hibernia  
26 Mine has declined to less than 500, a staggering 98 percent  
27 reduction; and  
28 WHEREAS, This drastic reduction in population is attributed to white-  
29 nose syndrome, a disease which attacks bats while they hibernate,  
30 leaving them with white markings around their muzzles and severe  
31 scarring on their wings; and  
32 WHEREAS, White-nose syndrome is caused by a fungus that  
33 researchers believe originated in Europe and was accidentally  
34 introduced to a cave in Albany, New York, in 2006, after which it  
35 spread to 28 states, including New Jersey where it first appeared in  
36 2009; and  
37 WHEREAS, While researchers have yet to find an effective treatment  
38 for white-nose syndrome, it seems that little brown bat population  
39 numbers have stabilized for the time being; though, because little  
40 brown bats produce only one pup per year, it may be many  
41 generations before population numbers are restored to what they  
42 once were; and  
43 WHEREAS, In consideration of the little brown bat's sensitivity to  
44 environmental disturbances, it is imperative that the people of New  
45 Jersey are made aware of the important contributions these small  
46 mammals make to the State and how to best preserve bat  
47 ecosystems, and so it is fitting and appropriate to designate the little

1 brown bat as the official bat of the State of New Jersey; now,  
2 therefore,

3

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

6

7 1. The little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) is designated as the  
8 New Jersey State Bat.

9

10 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

14

15 This bill designates the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) as the  
16 official bat of the State of New Jersey.

17 Found mostly in southern Canada and the northern half of the  
18 United States, the little brown bat is one of the most populous bats  
19 in New Jersey, and one of the most likely to come into contact with  
20 humans. Though it is one of the smaller bat species, the little  
21 brown bat can eat up to 4,500 insects in one night, thereby reducing  
22 the need for pesticides and preventing some of the environmental  
23 damage associated with pesticide use.

24 During the winter months, little brown bats are most commonly  
25 found hibernating in the Hibernia Mine in Morris County. In recent  
26 years, bat population numbers have sharply declined throughout the  
27 State. As of 2015, the little brown bat population in the Hibernia  
28 Mine has declined a staggering 98 percent. This drastic decline is  
29 attributed to white-nose syndrome, a disease which attacks bats  
30 while they hibernate, leaving them with white markings around  
31 their muzzles and severe scarring on their wings. While researchers  
32 have yet to find an effective treatment for white-nose syndrome, it  
33 seems that little brown bat population numbers have stabilized for  
34 the time being. However, since little brown bats produce only one  
35 pup per year, it may be many generations before population  
36 numbers are restored to what they once were.

37 In consideration of the little brown bat's sensitivity to  
38 environmental disturbances, it is imperative that the people of New  
39 Jersey are made aware of the important contributions these small  
40 mammals make to the State and how to best preserve bat  
41 ecosystems. It is therefore fitting and appropriate to designate the  
42 little brown bat as the official bat of the State of New Jersey.