

# SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### SENATE, No. 3770

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 9, 2020

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3770.

This bill establishes a 12-member “New Jersey Economic and Fiscal Policy Review Commission” in the Legislative Branch of State government. This legislation implements a proposal in the New Jersey Economic & Fiscal Policy Workgroup’s “Path to Progress” report, issued August 9, 2018.

The commission is charged with studying significant economic and fiscal concerns confronting the State to assure that policymakers, academics, and the public are provided with information and analyses of the State’s policies and their implications, ultimately improving the decision-making capabilities of State and local government officials, business leaders, and concerned members of the general public. The commission will be composed six members of the Legislature (three Senators and three Assemblypersons) and six public members. Legislative members of the commission would be serve during the two-year term in which they were appointed; public members would serve three-year terms.

The commission will engage in ongoing study of conditions and prospects for the State’s economy and other fiscal issues facing New Jersey. The bill requires the commission to adopt an annual plan of work. The plan of work will outline significant economic or fiscal policy concerns confronting the State that will be studied the commission during a calendar year. Issue studies must be completed within the calendar year they were initiated and transmitted to the Governor and Legislature with the commission’s annual report.

The commission may respond to specific study requests by the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the General Assembly if the work is within the staff and financial limits of the commission. To facilitate the commission’s work, the bill authorizes the commission to divide itself into subcommittees and task forces that can include persons other than members of the commission, such as academics, government officers, representatives of business, and other professionals, and the bill allows the commission to enter into cooperative arrangements with academic or research institutions as it deems necessary to accomplish its purposes.

The commission is authorized to employ an executive director and staff, employ counsel, and contract for professional and consulting

services, and incur other expenses within the limits of funds available for its purposes. The commission may call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, agency, or authority as it may require and as may be available and to make use of any existing studies, surveys, data, and other materials in the possession of any State agency or authority and such materials in the possession of any county, municipality, or political subdivision of the State. The commission is granted the powers available pursuant to Chapter 13 of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes, which includes the power to compel the attendance of witnesses.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) cannot assess the annual cost of the New Jersey Economic and Fiscal Policy Study Commission, since the bill does not explicitly stipulate the commission's staffing level and plan of operation. The bill does not make an appropriation to support the commission's staff and operations. A hypothetical example of eight employees, however, yields an estimated annual budgetary outlay of approximately \$1 million.