

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 4278

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 9, 2019

The Senate Environment and Energy Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 4278.

This bill appropriates \$21 million to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) for the purpose of providing planning incentive grants to counties for up to 80 percent of the cost of acquisition of development easements on farmland for farmland preservation purposes.

The funding in this bill is provided from constitutionally dedicated corporation business tax (CBT) revenues pursuant to Article VIII, Section II, paragraph 6 of the State Constitution, approved by the voters of the State in November 2014. The “Preserve New Jersey Act,” P.L.2016, c.12 (C.13:8C-50), implements the constitutional dedication of CBT revenues for open space, farmland, and historic preservation. The “Preserve New Jersey Farmland Preservation Fund” was established pursuant to section 8 of the “Preserve New Jersey Act.

Under the bill, six counties will each receive a “base grant” of either \$1 million or \$2 million, as specified in the bill. Those six counties, plus 12 other counties identified in the bill, would also be eligible to compete to receive an additional grant from the “competitive grant fund” pursuant to subsection c. of section 1 of the bill, in an amount not to exceed \$2 million. The maximum grant award a county could receive under the bill is \$4 million (i.e., the \$2 million base grant, if applicable, and a \$2 million competitive grant).

The bill also appropriates to the “Preserve New Jersey Farmland Preservation Fund” moneys from the General Fund already constitutionally dedicated to the “Preserve New Jersey Farmland Preservation Fund” for the purpose of making the appropriations from that fund required by this bill.

The allocations and projects listed in this bill have been approved by the SADC and the Garden State Preservation Trust.