

# ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### ASSEMBLY, No. 5709

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 18, 2021

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5709.

This bill appropriates \$10 million from the General Fund to the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA) to support the Sustain and Serve NJ Program.

In November 2020, the EDA established the Sustain and Serve NJ Program. Under the program, the EDA provides grants to organizations to support the bulk purchase of meals from local restaurants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Participating organizations are then required to distribute the meals, free of charge, to State residents. As such, the program is designed to support local restaurants, while also providing free meals for the public.

In February 2021, the EDA announced that \$14 million in grants were expected to be awarded through the Sustain and Serve NJ Program. According to the EDA, this funding is expected to result in the purchase of approximately 1.5 million meals. By appropriating an additional \$10 million for the program, roughly one million more meals will be purchased from local restaurants and distributed to needy populations.

Additionally, the bill allows the EDA to transfer uncommitted funds to other programs administered by the authority to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill also allows a portion of these funds to be used for administrative expenses.

As a condition of receiving State funds, the bill also requires the EDA to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature detailing the expenditure of program funds. At a minimum, the report would be required to indicate the number of organizations that applied for financial assistance; the number of organizations that received financial assistance; the amount of financial assistance provided to each recipient; and a brief description of each recipient.

#### FISCAL IMPACT:

This bill is not certified as requiring a fiscal note.