

# ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### ASSEMBLY, No. 319

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 3, 1997

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 319.

Assembly Bill No. 319 (1) appropriates \$15,284,000, and reappropriates \$2,788,000 (in unexpended balances from previous appropriations), from the "Green Acres, Clean Water, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 1992," P.L.1992, c.88, and (2) reappropriates \$328,000 (in unexpended balances from previous appropriations), and appropriates \$2,675,000 (in interest earnings), from the "Open Space Preservation Bond Act of 1989," P.L.1989, c.183, for farmland preservation projects approved as eligible for funding pursuant to this bill with respect to such projects located in southern New Jersey and pursuant to a companion bill (Senate Bill No. 1710 of 1996 or Assembly Bill No. 328 of 1996) with respect to such projects located in northern New Jersey. Specifically, the sums appropriated or reappropriated would be utilized to: (1) provide grants to counties and municipalities for up to 80% of the cost of acquisition of development easements on farmland; and (2) provide for up to 100% of the cost of acquisition of development easements under such emergency conditions as the State Agriculture Development Committee determines, in accordance with the provisions of the bond acts.

This bill also appropriates \$750,000 from the "Green Acres, Clean Water, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 1992," P.L.1992, c.88, to provide grants to qualifying farmland owners for up to 50% of the cost of soil and water conservation projects. Neither the 1992 bond act nor the 1995 bond act requires identification of the particular projects to be funded by the appropriation bill; thus, the State Agriculture Development Committee will decide which particular projects are to be funded with the monies for soil and water conservation grants.

Finally, the bill also appropriates from the "Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation, and Blue Acres Bond Act of 1995," P.L.1995, c.204, the sum of \$1 million to cover the costs, as defined in the bond act, incurred in implementing the "Agriculture Retention and Development Act," P.L.1983, c.32 (C.4:1C-11 et seq.), which is the major law concerned with the farmland preservation and development easement purchase program in the State.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total sum appropriated or reappropriated from various farmland preservation bond funds pursuant to the bill would be \$22,825,000.

The bill includes an appropriation of \$75,000 designated for the acquisition of a development easement on an additional parcel of 40 acres of the Rahilly farm in Burlington county, which is to supplement an earlier insufficient sum of \$350,000 (for approximately 107 acres) in connection with that farm that was appropriated pursuant to P.L.1996, c.54.