

# ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

### **ASSEMBLY, No. 926**

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JUNE 3, 1996

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No.926 (1R).

Assembly Bill No.926 (1R) establishes, in the Division of Parks and Forestry of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), a "New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Program" to assist county and municipal governments in the planning and management of local tree care programs. The program would be authorized to award grants for projects concerned with shade tree and community forest preservation, including the development and implementation of a comprehensive community forestry plan.

The bill provides for the establishment and issuance of a shade tree and community forest preservation license plate, the revenues from which would be deposited in a Shade Tree and Community Forest Preservation License Plate Fund. A fee of \$50 would be charged by the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for the purchase of each plate, and an annual renewal fee of \$10 would be subsequently assessed. Monies in the fund would be dedicated to the support of projects and programs concerned with shade tree and community forest preservation at the municipal and county levels. The Division of Parks and Forestry would administer the fund and the awarding of grants utilizing monies in the fund. The bill also supplements the "New Jersey Tort Claims Act" (N.J.S.59:1-1 et seq.) to provide immunity from liability to members of shade tree commissions and volunteers participating in a community forestry program.

#### FISCAL IMPACT:

In the legislative fiscal estimate to the identical bill, S591(1R), the DMV had estimated fixed costs at approximately \$41,000 for reprogramming and variable costs at \$8 per each set of two special plates. The DMV, however, did not estimate any revenue amounts. Other special plates have brought in a range of revenues: \$433,000 for animal welfare; \$236,000 for wildlife conservation; and \$899,000 for shore conservation.