

ASSEMBLY SENIOR ISSUES, TOURISM AND GAMING  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**ASSEMBLY, No. 966**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: FEBRUARY 15, 1996

The Assembly Senior Issues, Tourism and Gaming Committee reports favorably Assembly, No. 966.

This bill requires the Department of Commerce and Economic Development to establish within the Division of Travel and Tourism a tourism matching grant program for the period July 1, 1996 to June 30, 1997. The bill makes an appropriation of \$315,000, all of which shall be used for grants, to the department from the General Fund, effective July 1, 1996. The program shall issue grants to regional tourism councils, counties, municipalities and tourism promotion organizations to encourage creative promotional programs or events that complement State tourism promotional efforts. A grant award shall not exceed 50 percent of the eligible costs of the budget of a program or event. In order to increase travel from out-of-State and among the State's regions, these programs or events should also target out-of-State markets and in-State markets that are in excess of 35 miles from the activity or outside the organization's designated boundary. Program requirements, including application evaluation criteria, are set forth in the bill and would be further clarified through the adoption of rules and regulations by the Department of Commerce and Economic Development.

The bill requires that the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Economic Development submit a report on the tourism matching grant program to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the General Assembly, the chairman of the Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee, and the chairman of the Assembly Senior Issues, Tourism and Gaming Committee no later than September 1, 1997. The act shall take effect immediately and shall expire September 1, 1997.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 1996 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.