

FISCAL NOTE TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 1830
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 13, 1996

Assembly Bill No.1830 of 1996, the "New Jersey Aquaculture Development Act," establishes a program to encourage the development of an aquaculture industry in the State. The bill implements, in part, the "Aquaculture Development Plan," prepared by the Aquaculture Development Task Force pursuant to Executive Order No.104 of 1993.

The bill designates the Department of Agriculture (DOA) as the lead agency for aquaculture marketing, promotion, advocacy and business development in New Jersey, and continues the regulatory role of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in waters of the State. The bill also designates the Aquaculture Technology Transfer Center as the primary State facility for aquaculture education, extension, demonstration, and industry development and commercialization in the State.

The bill establishes the Office of Aquaculture Coordination in the DOA. The office is directed to prepare a guidebook explaining the permit process for receiving all necessary permits or other approvals or exemptions to engage in an aquaculture project in the State. The office would serve as a resource for applicants and prospective applicants for aquaculture projects. The office is directed to establish, in cooperation with other permitting agencies, a permit coordination system that would, among other duties, assist the applicant in the completion and processing of an application.

The bill establishes an 11-member Aquaculture Advisory Council that would function in an advisory capacity to the DOA and other State agencies on aquaculture matters. The advisory council is also directed to review and update the Aquaculture Development Plan.

The bill directs the DOA, the DEP, the Department of Commerce and Economic Development (DCED), and the Department of Health (DOH), after consultation with the Aquaculture Advisory Council, to enter into interagency memoranda of agreement concerning the implementation of the Aquaculture Development Plan, and delineating the financial and regulatory responsibility for aquaculture based upon the provisions of this act and any other applicable laws.

The DOA is the only agency that provided fiscal note information on the bill. While it stated that revenues from licensing and permitting fees could not be estimated until such fee rates and other criteria are determined, it estimated additional operating costs under the bill at \$200,000 in the initial implementation year and \$250,000 annually

thereafter. The first-year costs reflect mostly non-salary expenses associated with the creation of the Office of Aquaculture Coordination and other functions mandated under the bill. Approximately two-thirds of annual costs thereafter represent the salary expenses of four employees who would staff this new office.

The Office of Legislative Services concurs with the DOA's estimates and notes that these costs, as well as any additional expenses incurred by the other participating agencies under the bill, will be offset to some degree by the revenues generated by permits, licenses, and other economic benefits stemming from the growth of this industry.

This fiscal note has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.