

ASSEMBLY, No. 2132

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED JUNE 3, 1996

By Assemblyman ASSELTA

1 AN ACT establishing an interdepartmental ecotourism task force and
2 supplementing Title 13 of the Revised Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6

7 1. a. There is established within the Department of Environmental
8 Protection the "Ecotourism Development and Strategic Planning Task
9 Force, hereinafter referred to as the "task force."

10 b. The Commissioner of Environmental Protection, the
11 Commissioner of Commerce and Economic Development, the
12 Commissioner of Transportation, and the Secretary of Agriculture
13 shall each appoint three employees of their respective departments to
14 the task force. Each member of the task force shall be a person of
15 recognized ability and experience in one or more of the following
16 areas: parks management, natural resource protection, forestry,
17 wildlife conservation, economic development, small business attraction
18 and retention, marketing, tourism, agri-business, and road and trail
19 building. The commissioners together shall select the chairperson and
20 vice-chairperson of the task force from among its members. The task
21 force shall organize as soon as may be practicable after the
22 appointment of its members.

23 c. The task force shall meet regularly as it may determine, and shall
24 also meet at the call of the chairperson of the task force.

25 d. A majority of the membership of the task force shall constitute
26 a quorum for the transaction of task force business. Action may be
27 taken and motions and resolutions adopted by the task force at any
28 meeting thereof by the affirmative vote of a majority of the
29 membership of the task force in attendance at the meeting.

30 e. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail
31 itself of the services of such employees of any State, county, or
32 municipal department, authority, board, bureau, commission, agency,
33 or entity, or of Rutgers, The State University or any other public
34 institution of higher education in the State, as it may require and as
35 may be available to it for the purpose of carrying out its duties under
36 this act.

- 1 2. It shall be the duty of the task force to:
- 2 a. Identify existing and potential natural, historic and cultural
- 3 resources that could be promoted as ecotourism destinations;
- 4 b. Evaluate and assess the measures recommended to be taken to
- 5 ensure that the promotion of a resource identified pursuant to
- 6 subsection a. of this section results in the preservation and increased
- 7 protection of the resource, which shall include, but need not be limited
- 8 to, any appropriate private, public or volunteer enforcement function,
- 9 the creation or enhancement of educational or interpretive facilities or
- 10 programs, and the coordination with local communities with regard
- 11 to the resource management strategy to be employed;
- 12 c. Evaluate and assess the capacity of the resources identified
- 13 pursuant to subsection a. of this section to accommodate tourism-
- 14 related development and activities, which shall include, but need not
- 15 be limited to, the creation or enhancement of transportation or other
- 16 infrastructure, tourist visitation, and small business development;
- 17 d. Investigate methods for funding the costs of ecotourism
- 18 promotion and development as well as resource preservation, including
- 19 the use of volunteers, soliciting private financial support, providing
- 20 departmental educational and technical assistance for interested public,
- 21 nonprofit, and private entities, and establishing collaborative
- 22 relationships between State agencies, the tourism industry and local
- 23 communities; and
- 24 e. Hold such public hearings as it may deem necessary to solicit
- 25 public input on the matters set forth in this section.

26

27 3. The task force shall report its findings and conclusions and any

28 recommendations for legislative or administrative action to the

29 Governor, the Legislature, the Commissioner of Environmental

30 Protection, the Commissioner of Commerce and Economic

31 Development, the Commissioner of Transportation, the Secretary of

32 Agriculture, and the public within one year of the effective date of this

33 act, whereupon the task force shall dissolve.

34

35 4. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Ecotourism

36 Development and Strategic Planning Task Force established pursuant

37 to this act the sum of \$25,000 to meet the administrative costs of the

38 task force in carrying out its duties pursuant to this act.

39

40 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

41

42

43

STATEMENT

44

45 This bill would create the Ecotourism Development and Strategic

46 Planning Task Force, to be composed of three employees from each

1 of the following departments: Environmental Protection, Commerce
2 and Economic Development, Transportation and Agriculture.
3 Appointments would be made by the respective department
4 commissioners, or secretary in the case of Agriculture, based on the
5 employee's recognized ability and experience in one or more of the
6 following areas: parks management, natural resource protection,
7 forestry, wildlife conservation, economic development, small business
8 attraction and retention, marketing, tourism, agri-business, and road
9 and trail building.

10 The task force would be charged with 1) identifying existing and
11 potential natural, historic and cultural resources that could be
12 promoted as ecotourism destinations; 2) evaluating the measures
13 necessary to ensure that the promotion of a targeted resource results
14 in the preservation and increased protection of the resource; 3)
15 evaluating the capacity of the targeted resource to accommodate
16 tourism-related development and activities; 4) investigating methods
17 for funding the costs of ecotourism promotion and development as
18 well as resource preservation; and 5) holding public hearings deemed
19 necessary to solicit public input on these issues.

20 The task force would report its findings and conclusions and any
21 recommendations for legislative or administrative action to the
22 Governor, the Legislature, the Commissioners of Environmental
23 Protection, Commerce and Economic Development and
24 Transportation, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the public within one
25 year of the effective date of this act.

26 The bill makes an appropriation of \$25,000 to meet the
27 administrative costs of the task force in carrying out its duties
28 pursuant to this act.

29

30

31

32

33 Establishes Ecotourism Development and Strategic Planning Task
34 Force.