

ASSEMBLY AGRICULTURE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2896

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 12, 1997

The Assembly Agriculture and Waste Management Committee favorably reports Assembly Bill No. 2896 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill would exempt certain farm underground storage tanks from the requirement that tank closures be performed by persons certified by the Department of Environmental Protection as qualified to perform tank removals. The exemption would apply to tanks located on land that qualifies for farmland assessment pursuant to the "Farmland Assessment Act of 1964," P.L.1964, c.48 (C.54:4-23.1 et seq.), or on any land less than five acres in area that would otherwise qualify for that farmland assessment and that has produced agricultural or horticultural products with a wholesale value of \$10,000 or more annually for at least the two successive years immediately preceding the year in which the tank removal is performed.

Committee amendments revise the exemption to encompass tank closure. Committee amendments require a person performing tank closure on an underground storage tank located on a farm to comply with certain guidelines and criteria. Committee amendments direct the Department of Environmental Protection to implement, within 90 days of the effective date of this act, guidelines establishing a protocol for the performance of tank closures on a farm. Committee amendments also require that within 18 months of the effective date of the act, the Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and the State Soil Conservation Committee, adopt by regulation criteria for the performance of tank closures on farms. Finally, committee amendments direct that both the guidelines and the criteria be developed with the objectives of reducing the cost and increasing the efficiency of the process of tank closure while also ensuring environmental protection and public safety.