

ASSEMBLY STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2977

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JULY 10, 1997

The Assembly State Government Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2977.

This bill designates the schooner A.J. Meerwald as the New Jersey State Tall Ship and appropriates \$95,000 from the General Fund to the Delaware Bay Schooner Project for the A.J. Meerwald's maintenance and operation.

The A.J. Meerwald was a Delaware Bay oyster schooner, built to meet the needs of the local oyster fishing industry. Constructed in 1928 in Dorchester, New Jersey, the A.J. Meerwald was one of hundreds of schooners built along South Jersey's Delaware bayshore before the decline of the ship building industry during the Great Depression.

The Delaware Bay Schooner Project, founded in 1988 to conserve and enrich the history, culture and environment of the Delaware estuary, acquired the A.J. Meerwald by donation in 1989. The Delaware Bay Schooner Project uses the ship as a sailing classroom to promote ecological and historical awareness of the Delaware Bay region. In 1995, the A.J. Meerwald was added to the National Register of Historic Places.