

ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[Second Reprint]
SENATE, No. 955

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 23, 1997

The Assembly Environment, Science and Technology Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 955 (2R) with committee amendments.

This bill requires the Department of the Treasury to establish a State-sponsored affinity card program. The card will be known as the "New Jersey Nature Card."

The bill requires the State Treasurer to determine which financial institutions could participate as an issuer of affinity cards and to send to them a request for proposal (RFP) regarding a New Jersey affinity card program. The State Treasurer will then enter into a contract with a financial institution to be the issuer of the State-sponsored affinity card and negotiate the most favorable rate for the State's fees.

The bill also requires that fees raised from the State-sponsored affinity card program be deposited by the State Treasurer into a special non-lapsing fund. The moneys in the fund would not be expended except in accordance with appropriations from the fund made by law. Any act appropriating moneys from the fund would identify the particular project or projects to be funded by the moneys.

The bill as before the committee provides that the moneys in the fund would be appropriated according to the following formula:

(1) One-third for use by the State to acquire lands for recreation and conservation purposes under the State Green Acres program in the Department of Environmental Protection;

(2) One-third for use by the State to provide State grants, on an up to 50% matching basis, to qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organizations to acquire lands for recreation and conservation purposes in accordance with the program and criteria therefor established for the award of matching grants to qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organizations for recreation and conservation purposes pursuant to the "Open Space Preservation Bond Act of 1989," P.L.1989, c.183, the "Green Acres, Clean Water, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 1992," P.L.1992, c.88, and the

"Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation, and Blue Acres Bond Act of 1995," P.L.1995, c.204, or similar Green Acres bond acts; and

(3) One-third for deposit in the "hunters' and anglers' license fund" created pursuant to R.S.23:3-11 and R.S.23:3-12, to be used by the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife for the same purposes as other moneys deposited in the "hunters' and anglers' license fund."

The committee amended the bill to clarify that the New Jersey Nature Card could be issued to any person deemed qualified therefor by the issuing financial institution; to provide that the allocation to the "hunters' and anglers' license fund" could not be used for salaries, wages, or administrative costs; to reduce the allocation to the "hunters' and anglers' license fund" from one-third to one-sixth of the revenue raised from the New Jersey Nature Card; and to provide that one-sixth of the revenue raised from the New Jersey Nature Card be allocated to the "Monmouth County Clam Depuration and Relay Program Fund" established pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1995, c.335 (C.58:24-13).

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 2663 of 1997 as also amended and reported by the committee.