

SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1264

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 6, 1996

The Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 1264 with Senate Committee amendments.

This bill would create the Ecotourism Development and Strategic Planning Task Force, to be composed of three employees from each of the following departments: Environmental Protection, Commerce and Economic Development, Transportation and Agriculture. Appointments would be made by the respective department commissioners, or secretary in the case of Agriculture, based on the employee's recognized ability and experience in one or more of the following areas: parks management, natural resource protection, forestry, wildlife conservation, economic development, small business attraction and retention, marketing, tourism, agri-business, and road and trail building.

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

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

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

The committee amended the bill to require the task force to consult with the Pinelands Commission when its duties concern resources located in the pinelands area. The committee also made purely technical amendments.