

# SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### SENATE, No. 1712

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 10, 1997

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1712.

Senate Bill No. 1712 appropriates \$22,825,000 from 1989, 1992 and 1995 bond acts for farmland preservation, soil and water conservation projects in northern and southern New Jersey. These appropriations will fund 80% matching grants for the acquisition of development easements on farmland, 100% of the acquisition costs of development easements on farmland under certain emergency conditions, and 50% matching grants for soil and water conservation programs. This bill also lists the farmland development easement projects to be funded in southern New Jersey; these projects are located in Cape May, Burlington, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean and Salem. The northern New Jersey projects to be funded are listed in companion legislation (Senate Bill No. 1710 of 1996 and Assembly Bill No. 328 of 1996).

This bill (1) appropriates \$15,284,000, and reappropriates \$2,788,000 (in unexpended balances from previous appropriations), from the "Green Acres, Clean Water, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 1992," P.L.1992, c.88, and (2) reappropriates \$328,000 (in unexpended balances from previous appropriations), and appropriates \$2,675,000 (in interest earnings), from the "Open Space Preservation Bond Act of 1989," P.L.1989, c.183, for farmland preservation projects in southern New Jersey approved as eligible for funding pursuant to this bill and for projects located in northern New Jersey set forth companion legislation (Senate Bill No. 1710 of 1996 or Assembly Bill No. 328 of 1996). Specifically, the sums appropriated or reappropriated would be utilized to: (1) provide grants to counties and municipalities for up to 80% of the cost of acquisition of development easements on farmland; and (2) provide for up to 100% of the cost of acquisition of development easements under such emergency conditions as the State Agriculture Development Committee determines, in accordance with the provisions of the bond acts.

This bill also appropriates \$750,000 from the "Green Acres, Clean Water, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 1992," P.L.1992, c.88, to provide grants to qualifying farmland owners for up

to 50% of the cost of soil and water conservation projects. With respect to soil and water conservation grants, neither the 1992 bond act nor the 1995 bond act requires identification of the particular projects to be funded by the appropriation bill; thus, the State Agriculture Development Committee will make the decisions with regard to the particular projects to be funded with the monies appropriated by this bill for soil and water conservation grants.

Finally, the bill appropriates \$1 million from the "Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation, and Blue Acres Bond Act of 1995," P.L.1995, c.204, to cover the implementation costs of the "Agriculture Retention and Development Act," P.L.1983, c.32 (C.4:1C-11 et seq.).

As reported, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 319 of 1996 (Kramer/Cottrell).

#### FISCAL IMPACT

This bill appropriates or reappropriates \$22,825,000 from various farmland preservation bond funds. This bill appropriates \$15,284,000, and reappropriates \$2,788,000 (in unexpended balances from previous appropriations), from the "Green Acres, Clean Water, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 1992," P.L.1992, c.88; reappropriates \$328,000 (in unexpended balances from previous appropriations), and appropriates \$2,675,000 (in interest earnings), from the "Open Space Preservation Bond Act of 1989," P.L.1989, c.183; appropriates \$750,000 from the "Green Acres, Clean Water, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 1992," P.L.1992, c.88; and \$1 million from the "Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation, and Blue Acres Bond Act of 1995," P.L.1995, c.204.