

# ASSEMBLY AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### ASSEMBLY, No. 1581

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 15, 2021

The Assembly Agriculture Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1581.

This bill establishes an “Invasive Species Task Force” which would be comprised of five ex officio members or their designees, including: (1) the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, (2) the Secretary of Agriculture; (3) the Commissioner of Health; (4) the State Forester; and (5) the Executive Director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers, the State University. This bill would make the Commissioner of Environmental Protection and the Secretary of Agriculture, or their respective designees, co-chairpersons of the Invasive Species Task Force.

The Invasive Species Task Force would:

(1) study the most efficient means of controlling invasive species;

(2) develop uniform policies and a coordinated response to the threat posed by invasive species to the State's native and agricultural vegetation, and ecological, cultural, historical, or infrastructure resources;

(3) develop a plan to prevent new invasive species from entering the State, and limit the continuing spread of invasive species that are already present;

(4) develop a plan to control infestations that currently exist;

(5) develop a plan to restore ecosystems to their natural condition, and to repair damage caused by invasive species;

(6) identify regulatory and statutory obstacles and inefficiencies at the federal, State, and local levels impeding the development or implementation of prevention, control, and restoration efforts;

(7) evaluate the 2009 New Jersey Strategic Management Plan for Invasive Species, prepared by the New Jersey Invasive Species Council pursuant to Executive Order No. 97 of 2004;

(8) explore and develop alternatives in addition to those discussed in the 2009 New Jersey Strategic Management Plan for Invasive Species, to control the entry and spread of new invasive species into the State;

(9) prepare a comprehensive invasive species management plan for the State that would include an estimate of the resources necessary for its implementation; and

(10) prepare recommendations for legislative action necessary to implement the report.

The bill directs the task force to prepare and submit a report of its findings, plans, and recommendations to the Governor and to the Legislature no later than one year after the task force organizes.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.