

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 347

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 347.

This bill establishes a “New Jersey One Health Task Force” in the Department of Health. The task force will be charged with developing a strategic plan to promote inter-disciplinary communication and collaboration between physicians, veterinarians, and other scientific professionals and State agencies, with the goal of promoting the health and well-being of the State’s residents, animals, and environment.

“One Health” is a term used to describe the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health factors. This interconnectedness can be used to predict how changes in one factor can affect the others, improve conditions among the various groups, and help prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases between species. A One Health approach encourages collaborative efforts of experts working across the human, animal, and environmental health fields to improve the health of people and animals, including pets, livestock, and wildlife.

The task force will consist of the following members: the Secretary of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, and the Commissioner of Health, or their respective designees; and 10 members appointed by the Governor, as follows: one person representing the medical community, who is a medical practitioner licensed to practice in the State; two people who are veterinarians licensed or approved to practice in the State by the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, one of whom has expertise, knowledge, and experience with farm animals; one person with expertise, knowledge, and experience in medical research; one person with expertise, knowledge, and experience in zoonotic diseases; two people with expertise, knowledge, and experience in epidemiology or biomedical sciences; and three people representing the State’s academic community with expertise, knowledge, and experience in public health, ecology, natural resources, or environmental and biological sciences.

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.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments revise the qualification criteria for the public members of the task force to harmonize the requirement that they have “expertise, knowledge, and experience” in certain various areas; as introduced, some members were required to have “knowledge, competence, or experience” while others were required to have “expertise, knowledge, and experience.”

The committee amendments remove a requirement that the Senate advise and consent to the appointment of public members by the Governor.

The committee amendments make various technical changes involving grammar and syntax.