

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3919

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 22, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3919.

This bill renames the Dismal Swamp and the Dismal Swamp Preservation Commission as the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve and Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preservation Commission, respectively.

Peter J. Barnes III served as a Member of the New Jersey General Assembly from 2007 until 2014 when he served as a Member of the State Senator. Peter J. Barnes III left the Senate in 2016 after he was nominated and confirmed to serve as a Superior Court Judge, where he remained until he passed away on February 22, 2021.

In 2008, then-Assemblyman Barnes sponsored the Dismal Swamp Preservation Act, P.L.2009, c.132 (C.40:55D-88.1 et seq.), which established the Dismal Swamp Preservation Commission, to provide comprehensive regulatory authority and regional planning for the area with a primary focus on protecting and preserving the ecological, historical, and recreational values of the area. Peter J. Barnes III was passionate about the preservation of the area, and fought hard to see that preservation realized, often going door to door to get the word out.

Dismal Swamp is the largest natural area remaining in Northern Middlesex County, and Peter J. Barnes III's support and work on this bill led to the conservation of approximately 660 acres of land. The area is home to over 175 species of birds, and two dozen species of mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, as well as a dozen threatened and endangered species. Renaming the Dismal Swamp as the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve is a fitting tribute to his effort and dedication towards protecting the area.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal information is currently unavailable for this bill.