

ASSEMBLY OVERSIGHT, REFORM AND FEDERAL
RELATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4634

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 13, 2022

The Assembly Oversight, Reform and Federal Relations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4634 (1R).

This bill would require each county board of agriculture to establish a two-year summer internship pilot program to provide working interns to farms in the State.

The internships would be open to students at high schools, vocational schools, and institutions of higher education, including graduate students. Each county board of agriculture would be required to develop an application process to allow interested students and farm owners to apply to participate in the pilot program. In order to participate, a farm owner would be required to agree to terms and conditions developed by the county board of agriculture, which would include a description of the knowledge and skills to be transmitted by the farm's owner, or a designated employee, to the intern. Other than the labor of the intern, the owner of the farm would not receive any financial compensation for participating in the pilot program. Each eligible farm would be authorized to host up to 10 interns during the months of May through September.

The bill would appropriate \$2.1 million from the General Fund to the Department of Agriculture to fund the pilot programs established by the bill. The bill would require the Department of Agriculture to distribute the funds to county boards of agriculture in order to fund the internship pilot program established by the bill. The bill would direct the Department of Agriculture to distribute the funds in a non-competitive manner to the county boards of agriculture in proportion to the expected number of interns. Up to five percent of the funds would be authorized to be used by the county boards of agriculture for administration costs.

Finally, the bill would require the Department of Agriculture to submit a report on the pilot program, within six months after its conclusion, to the Governor and the Legislature. The report would be required to provide an account of all State funds distributed pursuant

to the bill, a summary of the pilot program implemented by each county board of agriculture, and an assessment of the success in the program in cultivating an interest in agriculture in students in the State.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

There are proposed committee amendments to the bill to provide that the program be administered by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, that the program be available all year round, and increases the percentage of funds to be available to market and administer the program.