

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4711

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 22, 2023

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4711.

This bill concerns tourism funding and promotion in New Jersey.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires the Division of Travel and Tourism in the Department of State to re-draw the State tourism map to create a “Central Jersey” region including, at a minimum, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and Somerset counties. The division is directed to incorporate the new “Central Jersey” region in all regional marketing activities, including in publications and on the VisitNJ.org website. The bill further requires the division to eliminate any requirement from its grant applications and contracts that State tourism grant funds have to be targeted toward audiences located at a minimum distance from the awarded tourism site, and will include a flexible approach to promoting overnight stays.

As reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 4711 is identical to Senate Bill No. 3206 (1R), which also was reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The amendments remove the requirements for the division to:

- (1) use any federal economic relief funds in support of tourism promotion to benefit regions and activities most in need of economic relief, using the percentage of tourism decline in those regions or activities as the basis for how and where the relief funds are spent; and
- (2) dedicate at least 10 percent of its annual appropriations to the promotion of agritourism.

The amendments update the synopsis of the bill and make this bill identical to S3206 (1R).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services estimates that this bill will increase State costs by up to \$1 million in first year the bill is in effect,

and by an indeterminate amount every year thereafter, due to the creation of a new Central Jersey region on the State tourism map and the promotion of overnight stays. The specific cost impact will depend on decisions the Division of Travel and Tourism will make to implement the provisions of this bill.

To the extent that the promotion of tourism in Central Jersey leads to an increase in travel and tourism to New Jersey, the State and local governments could potentially experience an increase in annual tax revenue from these visitors.