

ASSEMBLY TOURISM, GAMING AND THE ARTS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5209

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 16, 2023

The Assembly Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5209.

This bill provides a recurring source of funding for agritourism, a significant part of farm-related revenue in New Jersey.

This bill defines “agritourism” as a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production or agricultural processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, winery, brewery, or other agricultural business for the purpose of entertaining or educating visitors and generating income for the farm, ranch, winery, brewery, or agricultural business owner. This bill would establish the “Agritourism Fund” and require an appropriation to the fund of \$2.5 million annually from the General Fund. The Division of Travel and Tourism in the Department of State would administer the fund and dispense grants to New Jersey businesses involved in agritourism.

According to data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service’s 2017 Census of Agriculture, New Jersey ranks seventh nationally in the percent of farm revenue derived from agritourism, with agritourism accounting for over a fifth of the State’s total farm revenue. However, the number of New Jersey farms participating in agritourism has declined from the last census count, highlighting the importance of supporting farms and other agricultural businesses that participate in agritourism and ensuring that as many New Jersey agricultural businesses as possible can benefit from the income agritourism generates. New Jersey’s rich agricultural history, and its official nickname, the Garden State, are worthy of continued investment.