ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1403

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 14, 2024

The Assembly Environment, Natural Resources, and Solid Waste Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1403.

This bill, designated as "Penny's Law," would require the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in consultation with the Department of Human Services (DHS), to develop guidelines for specific facilities and accommodations necessary to provide accessibility to beaches for persons with disabilities. The guidelines would be required to include recommendations for ramps, restrooms, showers, boardwalks, surf chairs, parking, and any other facilities deemed appropriate. The bill requires the DEP, when developing the guidelines, to consult with any persons or organizations with knowledge and experience in assisting individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The bill requires the DHS to establish a process by which such persons and organizations will be informed of their ability to provide input and recommendations in association with the development of beach accessibility guidelines. The DEP is also required to consider, as appropriate, the guidelines for beach access routes and facilities on federal lands that have been adopted by the United States Access Board. The bill requires the DEP to publish the guidelines on its Internet website and to distribute the guidelines to every county and municipality with publicly-owned beach or waterfront property.

This bill also requires the DEP to design a uniform label or sign that may be displayed by a State or local government at any beach that complies with the accessibility guidelines developed under the bill.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.