

SENATE, No. 2595

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 8, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator ANTHONY M. BUCCO

District 25 (Morris and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes bee-friendly habitat pilot program in Department of Agriculture; appropriates \$1 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing a pilot program for bee-friendly habitats, and
2 making an appropriation.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. a. The Department of Agriculture shall establish a bee-
8 friendly habitat pilot program to encourage homeowners and
9 businesses to convert their lawns into bee-friendly habitats in order
10 to support and protect the population of bees in the State. The
11 department shall administer the pilot program for one year
12 following the effective date of this section. The program shall
13 provide a reimbursement of up to \$250 for a homeowner and a
14 reimbursement of up to \$500 for a business. Reimbursement
15 awards totaling an amount not to exceed \$1 million shall be
16 awarded during the pilot program.

17 b. In establishing the pilot program pursuant to this section, the
18 department shall:

19 (1) develop guidelines and procedures for the submission of
20 applications by homeowners and businesses to receive a
21 reimbursement from the program;

22 (2) establish criteria for a homeowner or business to qualify for
23 a reimbursement from the program;

24 (3) develop and maintain an Internet website or webpage
25 providing information on how to start and manage a bee-friendly
26 habitat and information about the pilot program; and

27 (4) create a list of approved native plants, other plants, forbs, or
28 legumes that would qualify for reimbursement.

29 c. No later than six months after the completion of the pilot
30 program, submit a written report to the Governor and, pursuant to
31 section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature
32 summarizing:

33 (1) the number of homeowners and business who received
34 reimbursement under the pilot program and the amount of money
35 distributed to homeowners and businesses;

36 (2) the effectiveness of the pilot program in assisting with the
37 development of bee-friendly habitat;

38 (3) any recommendations concerning the need for a program or
39 additional funding to encourage the establishment of bee-friendly
40 habitats; and

41 (4) any other information that the department considers relevant
42 in assessing the pilot program.

43 d. As used in this section:

44 "Bee-friendly habitat" means a lawn that has been converted to
45 provide a sufficient proportion of plants, forbs, or legumes to
46 provide a steady supply of food to pollinating bees.

47 "Department" means Department of Agriculture.

1 2. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
2 Department of Agriculture the sum of \$1 million to be used for the
3 purposes of providing reimbursements to homeowners and
4 businesses pursuant to section 1 of this act.

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6 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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11 This bill would establish a bee-friendly habitat pilot program
12 within the Department of Agriculture (department) to encourage
13 homeowners and businesses to convert their lawns into bee-friendly
14 habitats in order to support and protect the population of bees in the
15 State.

16 The bill appropriates \$1 million to the fund for the pilot program.
17 Under the program, a homeowner would be eligible for a
18 reimbursement for eligible costs in an amount up to \$250 and
19 businesses would be eligible for up to \$500.

20 Under the bill, the department would be required to:

21 (1) develop guidelines and procedures for the submission of
22 applications by homeowners and businesses to receive a
23 reimbursement from the program;

24 (2) establish criteria for a homeowner or business to qualify for
25 a reimbursement from the program;

26 (3) develop and maintain an Internet website or webpage
27 providing information on how to start and manage a bee-friendly
28 habitat and information about the pilot program; and

29 (4) create a list of approved plants, forbs, or legumes that would
30 qualify for reimbursement.

31 No later than six months after the completion of the pilot
32 program, the department would be required to submit a written
33 report to the Governor and to the Legislature summarizing: the
34 number of homeowners and business who received reimbursement
35 under the pilot program and the amount of money distributed to
36 homeowners and businesses; the effectiveness of the pilot program
37 in assisting with the development of bee-friendly habitats; any
38 recommendations concerning the need for a program or additional
39 funding to encourage the establishment of bee-friendly habitats; and
40 any other information that the department considers relevant in
41 assessing the pilot program.