

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4029

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 22, 2026

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably, and with committee amendments, Assembly Bill No. 4029.

As amended, this bill would establish a “Farmer Supply Link Program” (program) to support New Jersey farmers in purchasing bulk agricultural supplies, developing agricultural capital, and accessing agricultural assets at a discounted rate. The goal of this program would be to mitigate the costs of starting and managing a farm business, and to maintain and improve the resilience of the farming industry. The program is to be administered by county agriculture development boards (boards).

Under the program, boards would be authorized to enter into contracts or purchase agreements with established agricultural product aggregators to purchase discounted bulk agricultural supplies. Boards would also be authorized to contract with an overseeing third-party, non-profit agency to organize agricultural party aggregator participation in the “Farmer Supply Link Program.” Agricultural supplies may include equipment, compost, fertilizer, fuel, farm infrastructure, seeds, livestock, and pesticides. Supplies would then be ordered by and sold to farmers.

The bill requires boards to establish rules, regulations, fee schedules, procurement goals, and formats for the distribution of agricultural supplies. Fees would be required to be reasonable, Consumer-Price-Index Adjusted, and sufficient to recover all costs associated with the execution of purchasing contracts, including all direct, indirect, and administrative costs. Boards are also required to establish terms governing the use of agricultural supplies purchased through the program. Any excess revenues collected by a board from the purchase of agricultural supplies through the “Farmer Supply Link Program,” would be refunded as a credit to program participants. In establishing rules for the program, boards are authorized to include prioritization of new and beginning farmers, or farmers with demonstrated financial need. Boards are also authorized to participate in any programs administered by federal departments and agencies in implementing the “Farmer Supply Link Program.”

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments to the bill:

(1) provide that excess revenue collected by the board from purchasing agricultural supplies through the program would be returned to participating farmers, rather than being deposited in the Preserve New Jersey Farmland Preservation Fund;

(2) remove provisions that would have required the SADC to establish a grant program to provide grants to boards during the first year of the “Farmer Supply Link Program”; and

(3) make certain clarifying and technical changes to the bill.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services finds that county agriculture development boards will experience an indeterminate increase in annual expenditures and revenues related to their role in the new Farmer Supply Link Program. The magnitude of the cost increases will principally depend on the prices paid by county boards for the purchase of bulk agricultural supplies, which cannot be known until the program is operational and contracts are negotiated.

Revenues for the county boards will increase by an indeterminate amount from the annual fees paid to them by farmers participating in the program. The bill’s requirement that the fees set by county boards be adjusted annually for inflation and be sufficient to cover all of their costs under the purchase contract, including administrative costs, should ensure that revenues collected by the county boards are sufficient to cover their expenses. Any excess revenues collected are required to be returned to farmers participating in the program.

The Department of Agriculture and the State Agriculture Development Committee will incur an indeterminate amount of annual costs related to their administrative roles under the program.