SENATE, No. 4636

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 1, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)
Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER
District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes NJ Native Seed Commission to develop plan to increase production and use of native seeds in State.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/22/2026)

AN ACT concerning the production and use of native seeds in the State.

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

1. a. There is established in the Department of Agriculture the New Jersey Native Seed Commission. The purpose of the commission shall be to develop a plan to:

(1) increase the production of native seeds in the State;

(2) increase the use of native seeds in public land management, roadside landscaping, reforestation, habitat restoration, and other projects as determined by the commission; and

(3) ensure that native seeds are commercially available in the State at a reasonable cost and in adequate supply.

b. The commission shall consist of 11 members as follows:

(1) the Secretary of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, and the Commissioner of Transportation, who shall serve ex officio, or their respective designees;

(2) the following public members, appointed by the Governor:

(a) one member representing plant nurseries in the State;

(b) one member representing seed suppliers;

(c) one member with experience or expertise in public land management and open space preservation;

(d) one member with experience or expertise in highway engineering and roadside landscaping;

(e) one member of the academic community with expertise in native plants and native seeds; and

(f) one member representing an environmental education and conservation advocacy organization in the State;

(3) one public member with expertise in the horticulture industry, appointed by the Senate President; and

(4) one public member with expertise in the horticulture industry, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

c. All appointments to the commission shall be made no later than 90 days after the effective date of this act. Each member shall serve for the duration of the commission, and vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. The members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be eligible for reimbursement for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the commission for its purposes.

d. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable following the appointment of its public members and shall select a chairperson and a vice-chairperson from among its members, as well as a secretary who need not be a member of the commission. A majority of the membership of the commission shall constitute a

quorum for the transaction of commission business. The commission may meet and hold hearings at the place or places the commission designates.

The Department of Agriculture shall provide staff support to the commission. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as the commission may require and as may be available to the commission for its purposes.

e. No later than one year after its organization, the commission shall prepare and submit to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature, a final report detailing the commission's plan to increase the production and use of native seeds in the State, including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action that are necessary to effectuate the plan. The final report prepared by the commission shall include:

(1) an assessment of the current and projected demand for native seeds by State agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private entities;

(2) an assessment of the current capacity of New Jersey growers, nurseries, and seed suppliers to meet the demand for native seeds;

(3) an analysis of the costs and benefits, including installation costs, maintenance costs, lifecycle costs, environmental benefits, and anticipated long-term savings, associated with the use of native seeds in public environmental projects, including those for:

(a) land management;

(b) roadside rights-of-way;

(c) roadside landscaping;

(d) reforestation;

(e) habitat restoration;

(f) stormwater management; and

(g) any other public projects that the commission deems amenable to the use of native seeds;

(4) an evaluation of the regulatory, logistical, technical, and market barriers to increasing the production, commercial availability, and use of native seeds in New Jersey;

(5) recommendations concerning funding mechanisms, procurement standards, market development strategies, and other actions necessary to increase the availability and use of native seeds in New Jersey, including recommendations concerning seed sourcing, regional suitability, species diversity, contamination prevention, and the use of substitute seed materials when a native seed is unavailable; and

(6) the identification of no fewer than three pilot project opportunities for the use of native seeds on lands owned or managed by the Department of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection, or other public entities, including a description of the anticipated operational, environmental, and

maintenance considerations associated with each pilot project, which considerations shall include, but not be limited to, impacts on roadside vegetation management, pollinator habitat development, erosion control, stormwater management, and infrastructure resilience.

f. If the commission's final report includes recommendations for regulatory or administrative action, the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Transportation, shall, within 180 days of receipt of the commission's final report, submit a follow-up report to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), evaluating those recommendations. The evaluation shall, at a minimum, identify any:

(1) regulatory or administrative action already taken in response to the commission's report;

(2) rule or regulation proposed in response to the commission's report; and

(3) further actions the State may take in response to the commission's report.

g. The commission shall expire 30 days after submission of its final report pursuant to subsection e. of this section.

h. As used in this section, "native seed" means a germinating seed, or other plant part used to propagate a plant, that originates from a plant species that is indigenous to New Jersey.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill would establish the New Jersey Native Seed Commission in the Department of Agriculture (commission).

The purpose of the commission would be to develop a plan to: (1) increase the production of native seeds in the State; (2) increase the use of native seeds in public land management, roadside landscaping, reforestation, habitat restoration, and other projects as determined by the commission; and (3) ensure that native seeds are commercially available in the State at a reasonable cost and in adequate supply.

The commission would consist of 11 members, including the Secretary of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, and the Commissioner of Transportation, each of whom would serve ex officio, or their respective designees, and other stakeholders and experts.

No later than one year after its organization, the commission would be required to prepare and submit to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature, a final report detailing the commission's plan to increase the production and

use of native seeds in the State, including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action necessary to effectuate the plan.

The final report prepared by the commission would include: (1) an assessment of the current and projected demand for native seeds by State agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private entities; (2) an assessment of the current capacity of New Jersey growers, nurseries, and seed suppliers to meet the demand for native seeds; (3) an analysis of the costs and benefits associated with the use of native seeds in public environmental projects, including those for land management, transportation rights-of-way, roadside landscaping, reforestation, habitat restoration, and stormwater management; (4) an evaluation of the regulatory, logistical, technical, and market barriers to increasing the production, commercial availability, and use of native seeds in the State; (5) recommendations concerning funding mechanisms, procurement standards, market development strategies, and other actions necessary to increase the availability and use of native seeds in New Jersey; and (6) the identification of no fewer than three pilot project opportunities on lands owned or managed by the Department of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection, or other State agencies and public entities.

If the commission's final report included recommendations for regulatory or administrative action, the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Transportation, would be required to submit a follow-up report, within 180 days of receipt of the commission's final report, to the Governor and the Legislature. The follow-up report would evaluate the commission's recommendations, identify any actions already taken by the State to increase the use of native seeds in New Jersey, and identify any future anticipated actions by the State to increase the use of native seeds in New Jersey, as responsive to the commission's report. Both the commission's final report and the State's follow up report would be made available to any interested person at a reasonable cost.

The commission would expire 30 days after submission of its plan under the bill.