

SENATE, No. 4636

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 1, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

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.



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

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. a. There is established in the Department of Agriculture the
8 New Jersey Native Seed Commission. The purpose of the
9 commission shall be to develop a plan to:

- 10 (1) increase the production of native seeds in the State;
11 (2) increase the use of native seeds in public land management,
12 roadside landscaping, reforestation, habitat restoration, and other
13 projects as determined by the commission; and
14 (3) ensure that native seeds are commercially available in the
15 State at a reasonable cost and in adequate supply.

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

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

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

- 21 (a) one member representing plant nurseries in the State;
22 (b) one member representing seed suppliers;
23 (c) one member with experience or expertise in public land
24 management and open space preservation;
25 (d) one member with experience or expertise in highway
26 engineering and roadside landscaping;
27 (e) one member of the academic community with expertise in
28 native plants and native seeds; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 (a) land management;

27 (b) roadside rights-of-way;

28 (c) roadside landscaping;

29 (d) reforestation;

30 (e) habitat restoration;

31 (f) stormwater management; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25
26 2. This act shall take effect immediately.
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29 STATEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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