ASSEMBLY COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3698

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 22, 2024

The Assembly Commerce, Economic Development and Agriculture Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3698.

This bill would appropriate $1.723 million to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) for farmland preservation purposes. Specifically, the bill would appropriate funds for grants to one qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization for projects for five farms. The grants provided by the bill are for up to 50 percent of the cost of acquisition of development easements on farmland for farmland preservation purposes, or up to 50 percent of the cost of acquisition of fee simple titles to farmland for resale or lease with agricultural deed restrictions approved by the SADC.

Of the total appropriated, $896,678.23 is from constitutionally dedicated corporation business tax (CBT) revenues, pursuant to Article VIII, Section II, paragraph 6 of the State Constitution, approved by the voters of the State in November 2014. The "Preserve New Jersey Act," P.L.2016, c.12 (C.13:8C-43 et seq.), implements the constitutional dedication of CBT revenues for open space, farmland, and historic preservation. The "Preserve New Jersey Farmland Preservation Fund" was established pursuant to section 8 of the "Preserve New Jersey Act.

In addition, of the total appropriated, $826,321.77 is from the "2009 Farmland Preservation Fund," established pursuant to section 18 of the "Green Acres, Water Supply and Floodplain Protection, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 2009," P.L.2009, c.117. All the funds in the bill are made available due to the reallocation of previously appropriated monies.

The allocations and projects listed in this bill have been approved by the SADC and the Garden State Preservation Trust.