ASSEMBLY COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5357

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 6, 2025

The Assembly Commerce, Economic Development and Agriculture Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 5357.

This bill, as amended by the committee, would direct the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to create a farm pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer collection and disposal program to collect, transport, and dispose of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers held or owned by commercial farms. Participation in the program by commercial farms would be voluntary.

In implementing the program, the DEP would: (1) strategically place collection sites in diverse regions of the State; (2) offer at least two collection events per year in each collection site; (3) contract with, and provide oversight of, entities qualified to safely collect and dispose of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, and their containers; and (4) appoint local agents or representatives to inventory pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, and their containers collected and disposed of or recycled through the program. The DEP would also be required to develop and publish an annual report that provides information about the program.

The Department of Agriculture, acting in consultation with the DEP, would establish a cooperative public education and awareness campaign to inform farmers about: (1) the location of collection sites, and dates of upcoming collection events; (2) the types of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers and their containers accepted under the program; (3) the benefits of the program for farmers; and (4) the environmental benefits of the program. This information would be posted on the Department of Agriculture's Internet website and would be updated as necessary. The bill would take effect on the 180th day after the date of enactment.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments to the bill:

(1) expand the scope of the program to include herbicides and fertilizers, in addition to pesticides; and

(2) require the DEP to submit an annual report about the program to the Governor and the Legislature.