

VETO MESSAGE: No

GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING: Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS: No

HEARINGS: No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: Yes

Beatrice Forman (Staff Writer), 'Central Jersey now an official region - A bill signed by Gov. Phil Murphy now designates four counties as being part of neither North nor South Jersey.', *Philadelphia Inquirer, The* (online), 26 Aug2023 B6

Kimberly Redmond, 'Murphy signs law adding Central Jersey to state's tourism map', *NJBIZ* (online), 24 Aug 2023

CL/JA

P.L. 2023, CHAPTER 149, *approved August 24, 2023*
Senate, No. 3206 (*First Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning tourism funding and promotion in New Jersey
2 and supplementing P.L.1977, c.225 (C.34:1A-45 et seq.).
3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:
6

7 1. a. ¹**[**Any use of federal economic relief funds in support of
8 tourism promotion shall be designed to primarily benefit regions and
9 activities most in need of economic relief, using the percentage of
10 tourism decline in those regions or activities as the basis for directing
11 the spending of relief funds.

12 b.¹**]** The Division of Travel and Tourism shall re-draw the
13 State tourism map to create a “Central Jersey” region comprised, at a
14 minimum of the counties of Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and
15 Somerset, and to incorporate the “Central Jersey” region in all regional
16 marketing activities, including in publications and on the VisitNJ.org
17 website.

18 ¹**[**c.¹b.¹ The division shall remove from its grant applications
19 and contracts any requirement that State tourism grant funds be
20 targeted to audiences located at a minimum distance, and shall
21 promote overnight stays.

22 ¹**[**d. The division shall dedicate at least 10 percent of its
23 annual appropriation to the promotion of agritourism, including visits
24 to farms, craft beverage makers, farm-to-table restaurants, farmers’
25 markets, and agriculturally themed festivals.¹**]**
26

27 2. This act shall take effect 90 days following enactment.
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29
30

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32 _____
33 Requires Division of Travel and Tourism to re-draw tourism map
to promote Central Jersey; requires promotion of overnight stays.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SSG committee amendments adopted June 12, 2023.

SENATE, No. 3206

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 13, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator ANDREW ZWICKER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Senator BOB SMITH

District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Requires Division of Travel and Tourism to promote Central Jersey, overnight stays, and agritourism; requires allocation of federal funds for tourism to certain regions and activities in need of economic relief.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/17/2022)

1 AN ACT concerning tourism funding and promotion in New Jersey
2 and supplementing P.L.1977, c.225 (C.34:1A-45 et seq.).

3

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

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7 1. a. Any use of federal economic relief funds in support of
8 tourism promotion shall be designed to primarily benefit regions
9 and activities most in need of economic relief, using the percentage
10 of tourism decline in those regions or activities as the basis for
11 directing the spending of relief funds.

12 b. The Division of Travel and Tourism shall re-draw the State
13 tourism map to create a “Central Jersey” region comprised, at a
14 minimum of the counties of Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and
15 Somerset, and to incorporate the “Central Jersey” region in all
16 regional marketing activities, including in publications and on the
17 VisitNJ.org website.

18 c. The division shall remove from its grant applications and
19 contracts any requirement that State tourism grant funds be targeted
20 to audiences located at a minimum distance, and shall promote
21 overnight stays.

22 d. The division shall dedicate at least 10 percent of its annual
23 appropriation to the promotion of agritourism, including visits to
24 farms, craft beverage makers, farm-to-table restaurants, farmers’
25 markets, and agriculturally themed festivals.

26

27 2. This act shall take effect 90 days following enactment.

28

29

30 STATEMENT

31

32 This bill concerns tourism funding and promotion in New Jersey.
33 Tourism is a significant part of New Jersey’s economic activity.
34 New Jersey’s rich agricultural history, and the reason for its name,
35 the Garden State, is worthy of more investment.

36 Any federal economic relief funds used by the division in
37 support of tourism promotion will be used to benefit regions and
38 activities most in need of economic relief after the COVID-19
39 crisis. The division will use the percentage of tourism decline in
40 those regions or activities as the basis for how and where the relief
41 funds are spent.

42 The division will re-draw the State tourism map to create a
43 “Central Jersey” region, minimally including Hunterdon, Mercer,
44 Middlesex, and Somerset counties. The division will then
45 incorporate the new “Central Jersey” region in all regional
46 marketing activities, including in publications and on the
47 VisitNJ.org website.

S3206 ZWICKER, B.SMITH

3

1 The division will eliminate any requirement from its grant
2 applications and contracts that State tourism grant funds have to be
3 targeted toward audiences located at a minimum distance from the
4 awarded tourism site, and will include a flexible approach to
5 promoting overnight stays. This will allow the State to attract
6 visitors from other markets, such as New York City and
7 Philadelphia.

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3206

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 22, 2023

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3206 (1R).

This bill concerns tourism funding and promotion in New Jersey.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires the Division of Travel and Tourism in the Department of State to re-draw the State tourism map to create a “Central Jersey” region including, at a minimum, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and Somerset counties. The division is directed to incorporate the new “Central Jersey” region in all regional marketing activities, including in publications and on the VisitNJ.org website. The bill further requires the division to eliminate any requirement from its grant applications and contracts that State tourism grant funds have to be targeted toward audiences located at a minimum distance from the awarded tourism site, and will include a flexible approach to promoting overnight stays.

As reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 3206 (1R) is identical to Assembly Bill No. 4711, which also was reported by the committee on this date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services estimates that this bill will increase State costs by up to \$1 million in first year the bill is in effect, and by an indeterminate amount every year thereafter, due to the creation of a new Central Jersey region on the State tourism map and the promotion of overnight stays. The specific cost impact will depend on decisions the Division of Travel and Tourism will make to implement the provisions of this bill.

To the extent that the promotion of tourism in Central Jersey leads to an increase in travel and tourism to New Jersey, the State and local governments could potentially experience an increase in annual tax revenue from these visitors.

SENATE STATE GOVERNMENT, WAGERING, TOURISM &
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO
SENATE, No. 3206

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 12, 2023

The Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3206.

This bill concerns tourism funding and promotion in New Jersey.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires the Division of Travel and Tourism in the Department of State to re-draw the State tourism map to create a “Central Jersey” region including, at a minimum, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and Somerset counties. The division is directed to incorporate the new “Central Jersey” region in all regional marketing activities, including in publications and on the VisitNJ.org website. The bill further requires the division to eliminate any requirement from its grant applications and contracts that State tourism grant funds have to be targeted toward audiences located at a minimum distance from the awarded tourism site, and will include a flexible approach to promoting overnight stays.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The amendments remove the requirements for the division to:

- (1) use any federal economic relief funds in support of tourism promotion to benefit regions and activities most in need of economic relief, using the percentage of tourism decline in those regions or activities as the basis for how and where the relief funds are spent;
- (2) dedicate at least 10 percent of its annual appropriations to the promotion of agritourism; and
- (3) update the synopsis of the bill.

ASSEMBLY, No. 4711

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 11, 2022

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman ROY FREIMAN

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblywoman SADAF F. JAFFER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblyman ANTHONY S. VERRELLI

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Assemblymen Stanley, Karabinchak, Danielsen, Benson, DeAngelo and
Assemblywoman Lopez**

SYNOPSIS

Requires Division of Travel and Tourism to promote Central Jersey, overnight stays, and agritourism; requires allocation of federal funds for tourism to certain regions and activities in need of economic relief.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/15/2022)

1 AN ACT concerning tourism funding and promotion in New Jersey
2 and supplementing P.L.1977, c.225 (C.34:1A-45 et seq.).

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
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7 1. a. Any use of federal economic relief funds in support of
8 tourism promotion shall be designed to primarily benefit regions
9 and activities most in need of economic relief, using the percentage
10 of tourism decline in those regions or activities as the basis for
11 directing the spending of relief funds.

12 b. The Division of Travel and Tourism shall re-draw the State
13 tourism map to create a “Central Jersey” region comprised, at a
14 minimum of the counties of Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and
15 Somerset, and to incorporate the “Central Jersey” region in all
16 regional marketing activities, including in publications and on the
17 VisitNJ.org website.

18 c. The division shall remove from its grant applications and
19 contracts any requirement that State tourism grant funds be targeted
20 to audiences located at a minimum distance, and shall promote
21 overnight stays.

22 d. The division shall dedicate at least 10 percent of its annual
23 appropriation to the promotion of agritourism, including visits to
24 farms, craft beverage makers, farm-to-table restaurants, farmers’
25 markets, and agriculturally themed festivals.

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27 2. This act shall take effect 90 days following enactment.

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36 Any federal economic relief funds used by the division in
37 support of tourism promotion will be used to benefit regions and
38 activities most in need of economic relief after the COVID-19
39 crisis. The division will use the percentage of tourism decline in
40 those regions or activities as the basis for how and where the relief
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44 Middlesex, and Somerset counties. The division will then
45 incorporate the new “Central Jersey” region in all regional
46 marketing activities, including in publications and on the
47 VisitNJ.org website.

A4711 FREIMAN, JAFFER

3

1 The division will eliminate any requirement from its grant
2 applications and contracts that State tourism grant funds have to be
3 targeted toward audiences located at a minimum distance from the
4 awarded tourism site, and will include a flexible approach to
5 promoting overnight stays. This will allow the State to attract
6 visitors from other markets, such as New York City and
7 Philadelphia.

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4711

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 22, 2023

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4711.

This bill concerns tourism funding and promotion in New Jersey.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires the Division of Travel and Tourism in the Department of State to re-draw the State tourism map to create a “Central Jersey” region including, at a minimum, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and Somerset counties. The division is directed to incorporate the new “Central Jersey” region in all regional marketing activities, including in publications and on the VisitNJ.org website. The bill further requires the division to eliminate any requirement from its grant applications and contracts that State tourism grant funds have to be targeted toward audiences located at a minimum distance from the awarded tourism site, and will include a flexible approach to promoting overnight stays.

As reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 4711 is identical to Senate Bill No. 3206 (1R), which also was reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The amendments remove the requirements for the division to:

- (1) use any federal economic relief funds in support of tourism promotion to benefit regions and activities most in need of economic relief, using the percentage of tourism decline in those regions or activities as the basis for how and where the relief funds are spent; and
- (2) dedicate at least 10 percent of its annual appropriations to the promotion of agritourism.

The amendments update the synopsis of the bill and make this bill identical to S3206 (1R).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services estimates that this bill will increase State costs by up to \$1 million in first year the bill is in effect,

and by an indeterminate amount every year thereafter, due to the creation of a new Central Jersey region on the State tourism map and the promotion of overnight stays. The specific cost impact will depend on decisions the Division of Travel and Tourism will make to implement the provisions of this bill.

To the extent that the promotion of tourism in Central Jersey leads to an increase in travel and tourism to New Jersey, the State and local governments could potentially experience an increase in annual tax revenue from these visitors.

Governor Murphy Settles Central Jersey Debate

08/24/2023

Continues Push to Promote Tourism in the Region

SOMERVILLE – Governor Phil Murphy today signed S3206 to promote Central Jersey tourism. The bill requires the Division of Travel and Tourism, within the Department of State, to draw the State tourism map to create a “Central Jersey” region and to incorporate it in all regional marketing campaigns, including publications and on [VisitNJ.org](https://www.visitnj.org). The “Central Jersey” region will be comprised of, at minimum, the counties of Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and Somerset. The Division of Travel and Tourism will also be required to promote overnight stays.

“Today, we settle the decades-old debate once and for all: Central Jersey exists,” said **Governor Murphy**. “The region has a rich history dating back to the American Revolution, with legacy graced by historical figures like George Washington. And today, Central Jersey is home to some of the nation’s leading public universities and host to beautiful agricultural landscapes and activities for tourists to immerse themselves in. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to share these wonders with the world.”

“Central Jersey exists! We are looking forward to working with our Division of Travel and Tourism to highlight this important region for residents and visitors alike,” said **New Jersey Secretary of State Tahesha Way**. “Tourism is a vital part of our state’s economy and many of our communities rely upon visitors to support local small businesses. This legislation investment in the future of Central Jersey communities and will strengthen the region’s ability to draw new and returning guests.”

The bill will take effect 90 days after enactment. The prime sponsors for this bill are Senator Andrew Zwicker and Assemblyman Roy Freiman.

“We should properly promote all the regions of our state,” said **Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin**. “Central Jersey is blessed with beautiful destinations and a rich history. We will see a terrific return on our investment to attract tourism, including economic growth and job creation.”

“After 235 years since the founding of our great state, Central Jersey is finally on the map,” said **Senator Andrew Zwicker**. “While the very existence of the middle of our state has long been the subject of debate, we are long overdue in designating Central Jersey as the hub of tourism, innovation, and history that it is. This law will promote travel to our quaint river towns and canal villages, scenic walking sites, harvest festivals, breweries, and more Revolutionary War sites than you’ll find anywhere else. Central Jersey offers some of the best experiences to those traveling and vacationing in New Jersey. From this day forward, Central Jersey exists, and you should come visit.”

“Central Jersey holds a unique cultural and historical resonance in our state and offers a unique combination of historical, agricultural, artistic, and eco-tourism experiences that are comparable to any other part of the country,” said **Senator Bob Smith**. “We need to be doing all we can to promote Central Jersey as both a journey and a destination – a gem too often hidden that needs finally to be allowed to shine.”

“From the iconic Jersey shoreline to our bustling, vibrant cities in the north and south, New Jersey is rich in historic and famed tourist attractions. For too long the heart of our state has been home to our State capital, historic sites, and bucolic scenery—Central Jersey has not received the real attention it deserves,” said **Assemblyman Roy Freiman**. “Travel and tourism is a vital industry and an economic engine for the state generating thousands of jobs and attracting countless tourists each year. Redefining New Jersey’s tourism regions, looking at the way we fund tourism efforts, and delving into agritourism will help us highlight both our world-famous attractions and hidden gems.”

“Whether you are interested in history, wildlife, or the great outdoors, Central Jersey has a lot to offer,” said **Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer**. “With this law, we are committing to show residents and visitors alike all of the tourism destinations in New Jersey while also giving a boost to local economies.”

“Travel is an integral part of New Jersey’s economy,” said **Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli**. “When people come to visit our shoreline, historic sites, and cities, they generate significant economic benefits and drive local economies. By encouraging overnight tourism and clearly defining our tourism regions with a re-drawn map, we can encourage growth in this industry that will create new jobs and opportunities for New Jersey residents.”