

CHAPTER 385

AN ACT concerning membership of the State Agriculture Development Committee and amending P.L.1983, c.31.

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

1. Section 4 of P.L.1983, c.31 (C.4:1C-4) is amended to read as follows:

C.4:1C-4 State agriculture development committee; establishment; membership; terms; vacancies; meetings; minutes; staff.

4. a. In order that the State's regulatory action with respect to agricultural activities may be undertaken with a more complete understanding of the needs and difficulties of agriculture, there is established in the Executive Branch of the State Government a public body corporate and politic, with corporate succession, to be known as the State Agriculture Development Committee. For the purpose of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the committee is allocated within the Department of Agriculture, but, notwithstanding that allocation, the committee shall be independent of any supervision or control by the State Board of Agriculture, by the department or by the secretary or any officer or employee thereof, except as otherwise expressly provided in this act. The committee shall constitute an instrumentality of the State, exercising public and essential governmental functions, and the exercise by the committee of the powers conferred by this or any other act shall be held to be an essential governmental function of the State.

b. The committee shall consist of 11 members, five of whom shall be the Secretary of Agriculture, who shall serve as chairman, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, the Commissioner of Community Affairs, the State Treasurer and the Dean of Cook College, Rutgers University, or their designees, who shall serve *ex officio*, and six citizens of the State, to be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, four of whom shall be actively engaged in farming, the majority of whom shall own a portion of the land that they farm, and two of whom shall represent the general public. With respect to the members actively engaged in farming, the State Board of Agriculture shall recommend to the Governor a list of potential candidates and their alternates to be considered for each appointment.

c. (1) Of the six members first to be appointed, two shall be appointed for terms of two years, two for terms of three years and two for terms of four years. Thereafter, all appointments shall be made for terms of four years. Each of these members shall hold office for the term of the appointment and until a successor shall have been appointed and qualified. A member shall be eligible for reappointment for no more than two consecutive terms. Any vacancy in the membership occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment but for the unexpired term only.

(2) When an appointed member actively engaged in farming notifies the chairman that the member is unable to attend a publicly noticed meeting, an alternate may be chosen to serve for that member at the meeting. The alternate member shall be chosen by the Governor, in consultation with the President and the Vice President of the State Board of Agriculture, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The alternate member shall be a past member of the State Board of Agriculture who served pursuant to R.S.4:1-4, provided, however, that in no case shall the alternate member have been removed from office pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1948, c.447 (C.4:1-4.1), or a past member of the State Agriculture Development Committee.

(3) When an appointed member representing the general public notifies the chairman that the member is unable to attend a publicly noticed meeting, an alternate may be chosen to serve for that member at the meeting. The alternate member shall be chosen by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

d. Members of the committee shall receive no compensation but the appointed members may, subject to the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for these purposes, be reimbursed for expenses actually incurred in attending meetings of the committee and in performance of their duties as members thereof.

e. The committee shall meet at the call of the chairman as soon as may be practicable following appointment of its members and shall establish procedures for the conduct of regular and special meetings, including procedures for the notification of departments of State regulating the activities of commercial agriculture, provided that all meetings are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the "Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act," P.L.1975, c.231 (C.10:4-6 et seq.).

f. A true copy of the minutes of every meeting of the committee shall be prepared and forthwith delivered to the Governor. No action taken at such meeting by the committee shall have force or effect until 15 days, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, after such copy of the minutes shall have been so delivered. If, in said 15-day period, the Governor returns such copy of the minutes with a veto of any action taken by the committee at such meeting, such action shall be null and void and of no force and effect.

g. The department shall provide any personnel that may be required as staff for the committee.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 16, 2018.