

News From NJ Senate Democrats



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SMITH BILL TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR WILDLIFE PRESERVATION APPROVED

TRENTON - A bill sponsored by Senator Bob Smith which would provide \$381,715 in State funds and free up more than \$1 million in federal funds was approved by the Senate Monday by a vote of 35-0.

"The saying goes that you cannot make money without first spending money," said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, the Chairman of the Senate Environment Committee. "With this bill, we are investing a small sum, in the larger scheme of government expenditures, to qualify for over a million in federal funds for wildlife preservation. Those funds will go a long way towards protecting wildlife habitats and ensuring that many of the endangered species that call New Jersey home are not vulnerable to extinction."

The bill, S-1863, would require an annual appropriation from New Jersey's General Fund to provide the necessary State matching funds to qualify for the federal "State Wildlife Grants Program," which provides \$3 for every \$1 spent by a State for the benefit of wildlife and their habitat. The bill would appropriate \$381,715 for the current fiscal year, and stipulates that future appropriations would be made only after other statutorily-mandated revenue, such as wildlife license plate sales and gross income tax check-off donations, is collected.

"In New Jersey, development is spreading like wildfire, and it is just as damaging and destructive to the natural habitats of our State's wildlife," said Senator Smith. "We need programs, such as this one, to ensure that the impact from development on the other species with which we share this State is held in check. We cannot allow the sprawl that is so often touted as a factor in the declining quality of life in New Jersey to also be responsible for wiping out an endangered species as well."

The bill now heads to the Assembly for consideration.

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