

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

## GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY DESIGNATES BOG TURTLE AS STATE REPTILE

**TRENTON** – Today, Governor Murphy, joined by students at Riverside Elementary School, Senator Kip Bateman, and Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker, signed legislation S1925 (Bateman/Zwicker, Murphy, Freiman) into law to designate the Bog Turtle as New Jersey’s State Reptile. Two years ago, Mark Eastburn, science teacher at Riverside Elementary school, told his students that New Jersey did not have a state reptile. The students decided to take action and advocate for the endangered bog turtle to become New Jersey’s state reptile. They hope this designation will increase awareness to restore the habitat and help the species thrive.

“I commend New Jersey’s young students, teachers and scientists for working hard to protect our critically endangered bog turtles and our environment,” **said Governor Murphy**. “I could not be more excited to sign a bill officially making the bog turtle New Jersey’s state reptile. This bill shows that when we work together, we can accomplish some pretty great things.”

“We have been told that there are very few bills in the New Jersey Legislature that could ever pass a unanimous vote and we are very grateful that Democrats and Republicans can come together and support this effort,” **said Jeremy Wachtell, fifth-grade student at Riverside Elementary School**.

“We are so thankful that you have responded to our letters and we are also so grateful that you, along with Senator Bateman and Assemblyman Zwicker, have shown us that every person in New Jersey has a voice as long as we are not afraid to speak up,” **said Jamie Acevedo, fifth-grade student at Riverside Elementary School**.

“It shows that you can work together - Republicans and Democrats and Bog Turtles are not partisan - they are bipartisan.” He continued to tell the students, “Doing what we’re doing here today is really because of your actions and your teacher’s actions. The teachers here are going to be able to save a very valuable resource so you should be really proud of yourself,” **said Senator Kip Bateman**.

“I am so thrilled to be here and have the Governor here to sign this bill for all of the work you did and I just want to say slow and steady wins the race,” **said Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker**.

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