

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Bipartisan Legislation to Modernize and Reform Farmland Assessment Program

Posted on - 01/14/2026

Governor Signs Legislation on Final Episode of "Ask Governor Murphy" During Call-In from Constituent Jack Curtis of Mendham and Appoints Him to Farmland Evaluation Committee

Legislation Fosters Transparency and Boosts Public Trust in Key Government Program

Legislation Strengthens Enforcement by Raising Penalties for Offenses of Misrepresentation on Farmland Assessment Applications

Division of Taxation to Launch Online Application Portal This Year

MIDDLETOWN – Governor Phil Murphy today signed the "Farmland and Woodland Tax Assessment Integrity and Investment Act" (S3446/A6278 (https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A6500/6278_R1.PDF)) into law during the final episode of the "Ask Governor Murphy" radio broadcast on WNYC, WHYY, and WBGO. This bipartisan legislation advances significant reforms to New Jersey's Farmland Assessment Program to modernize our taxation system for farmland and woodland owners while adding invaluable voices to the State Farmland Evaluation Committee.

Over the past eight years, "Ask Governor Murphy" has welcomed hundreds of calls from constituents seeking to ask the Governor a question on a range of issues and topics. One such caller, Jack Curtis of Mendham, a retired educator from Morris County, made a lasting impression with his persistent advocacy to reform farmland taxation and improve the system as a whole for farmers and taxpayers. Governor Murphy met with Mr. Curtis in the State House in April 2024, and continued to work together for nearly two years on the legislation, which passed the Legislature earlier this week and was signed live on air this evening. This legislation comes one year after Mr. Curtis was honored as a special guest at the January 2025 State of the State, where Governor Murphy highlighted his reform proposal.

Thanks to Mr. Curtis' determination, Governor Murphy was proud to sign legislation updating the "Farmland Assessment Act of 1964," P.L. 1964, c.48 (C. 54:4-23.1 et seq.). This new law requires the State Farmland Evaluation Committee (FEC) to periodically adjust the minimum and anticipated gross sales and income requirements for land that qualifies as actively devoted to agricultural and horticultural use for valuation, assessment, and taxation under the act. These changes better reflect the realities faced by the state's farming communities and ensure the program continues to serve our dedicated farmers and protect the Garden State's natural resources.

In August of 2025, the FEC voted to raise the minimum sales threshold to \$1,900, taking effect in three years. The last statutory adjustment to the minimum threshold amount of farming revenue needed to qualify for the program occurred in 2013 through the enactment of legislation, P.L.2013, c.43, which set the amount at \$1,000.

The bill strengthens enforcement by raising penalties for offenses of misrepresentation on farmland assessment applications and establishes an online application portal to better provide transparency and efficiency in granted benefits. The Division of Taxation has announced (<https://www.nj.gov/treasury/news/2025/12112025.shtml>) that the online portal is set to launch this year for the assessment in Tax Year 2027.

This legislation also increases transparency by requiring the FEC to submit annual reports on the program's efficiency to the Governor, Legislature, and the State Board of Agriculture.

During the signing tonight, Governor Murphy informed Jack Curtis live on the air that he has nominated him to serve in a role on the FEC, ensuring a member of the public with demonstrated interest in government accountability and equitable taxation has a voice at the table where these decisions are made. Mr. Curtis will be one of three new members added to the FEC by the bill, along with the State Forester and a forester from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's list of Approved Consulting Foresters.

Because farm producers utilize their land to make key contributions to the state's economy, the signing of S3446/A6278 (https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A6500/6278_R1.PDF) builds on the Murphy Administration's commitment to providing property tax relief for New Jersey residents while fostering transparency and public trust in government programs.

"This new legislation will strengthen the Farmland Assessment Program and establish the necessary requirements to ensure fair taxation and environmental protection," **said Governor Murphy**. "I thank Jack Curtis for his unwavering dedication to ensuring that New Jersey's agricultural and horticultural lands are better protected and advocated for. This bill reflects our Administration's commitment to supporting and preserving the essential agricultural landscape of the Garden State. I'm proud that Jack brought this issue to my attention years ago as a constituent and worked patiently and collaboratively with us to make real change – this is exactly what responsive government is meant to do."

"The bill takes further steps to improve the integrity of the Farmland Assessment program by adding forestry expertise to the Evaluation Committee," **said Ed Wengryn, Secretary of Agriculture**. "The bill also calls for additional reporting that will improve the transparency of the program."

"I am deeply grateful to Governor Murphy, his administration, Director of Taxation Marita Sciarrotta, and bipartisan legislators like Senator Joe Pennacchio, Senator Anthony Bucco, and Assemblyman William Spearman for enacting the Farmland and Woodland Tax Assessment Integrity and Investment Act," **said Jack Curtis, a retired educator who was a special guest at the last State of the State**. "This bill is a helpful step towards making sure that the farmland assessment benefits real farmers, and it builds on other efforts like an increased sales threshold and online filing system. I'm proud to advocate for accountability and appreciate how seriously the Governor takes constituent services."

Sponsors of the legislation S3446/A6278 (https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A6500/6278_R1.PDF) include Senators Joseph Pennacchio and Anthony Bucco, and Assemblyman William Spearman.

“The farmland assessment program is an essential tool that preserves open spaces and safeguards our water and food supplies. I wholeheartedly support the mission of this program, but the existence of more than 37,000 assessed properties raises serious questions about the program’s integrity. With the Governor’s signature, strengthening oversight will help ensure the rules are enforced properly and provide transparency for taxpayers,” **said Senator Joseph Pennacchio.**

“The public has a right to know if the system is being gamed. This legislation, now signed into law, examines whether farm activity justifies the tax benefits being claimed and assesses the impact those benefits have on surrounding communities. Our goal is to ensure the program remains true to its original intent and is protected from abuse,” **said Senator Anthony Bucco.**

“This law strengthens the integrity of New Jersey’s farmland assessment program by making sure it works as intended, by supporting farmers and foresters while protecting everyday taxpayers,” **said Assemblyman William Spearman.** “By updating outdated eligibility standards, increasing penalties for misrepresentation, and modernizing the application process, we are bringing greater transparency and accountability to a program that has a real impact on local property taxes and our agricultural future.”

“The New Jersey Farm Bureau is thankful to the sponsors and all who worked on this legislation that modernizes farmland assessment while maintaining the core principles of the program that have helped keep farmers on the land in the Garden State for decades,” **said New Jersey Farm Bureau President Allen Carter.** “This legislation expands representation on the Farmland Evaluation Committee that guides the program and increases fines on bad actors who try to take unfair advantage of this tax benefit.”

“This new legislation comes to a mutually beneficial compromise on agriculture revenue requirements and application fees,” **said Agriculture State Board President Bob Blew.** “Signing this legislation will ensure the Farmland Assessment Program can support farmers for years to come.”

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](#)

Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about\)](#)

[Lt. Governor Tahesha Way \(/governor/admin/lt\)](#)

[In memoriam of Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt-sheila-y-oliver\)](#)

[Senior Staff \(/governor/admin/staff\)](#)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet\)](#)

[Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy \(/governor/climateaction/\)](#)

[Office of Equity \(/governor/admin/equity/\)](#)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency](#)

[\(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](#)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca\)](#)

New Jersey Puerto Rico Commission (<https://www.nj.gov/puertoricocommission/>)
Internship Opportunities (</governor/admin/internship.shtml>)
Governor's Fellows Program (</governor/admin/fellows>)
Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket (<http://drumthwacket.org/>)

Key Initiatives

Economy & Jobs (</governor/initiatives/#Economy>)
Education (</governor/initiatives/#Education>)
Environment (</governor/initiatives/#Environment>)
Health (</governor/initiatives/#Health>)
Law & Justice (</governor/initiatives/#Justice>)
Transportation (</governor/initiatives/#Transportation>)

News & Events

Press Releases (/governor/news/news/562026/approved/news_archive.shtml)
Photos (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy>)
Public Addresses (</governor/news/addresses>)
Executive Orders (/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)
Administrative Orders (/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)
Direct Appointments (</governor/news/appointments>)
Advice and Consent Appointments (</governor/news/acappointments>)
Statements on Legislation (/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)
Administration Reports (</governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml>)
Transition Reports (/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)
Press Kits (</governor/news/press>)

Social

Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/>)
Twitter (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)
Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>)
Snapchat (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>)
YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>)
Bluesky (<https://bsky.app/profile/govmurphy.bsky.social>)

Contact Us

Scheduling Requests (</governor/contact/scheduling/>)

Contact Us (</governor/contact/all/>)

Statewide

NJ Home ([//www.nj.gov](http://www.nj.gov))

Services A to Z ([//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html))

Departments/Agencies ([//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/))

FAQs ([//www.nj.gov/faqs/](http://www.nj.gov/faqs/))

Contact Us ([//www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html](http://www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html))

Privacy Notice ([//www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html](http://www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html))

Legal Statement & Disclaimers ([//www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html](http://www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html))

Accessibility Statement ([//www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html](http://www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html))

([//nj.gov/opra/](http://nj.gov/opra/))

(<https://my.nj.gov/>)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2026
Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000

(<https://tech.nj.gov/>)