

Governor Phil Murphy

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 re-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://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 a 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 is an investment in the future of Central Jersey communities and will strengthen the region’s ability to draw new and returning guests.”


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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—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.”

Governor Phil Murphy

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