
THIS WEEK IN TRENTON



PUBLIC STRATEGIES IMPACT
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS • PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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Governor Urges Passage of COAH Legislation

Governor Christie this week urged the Assembly to pass **Senate Bill 1** which eliminates the Council on Affordable Housing and revises and reforms many of the statutes relating to affordable housing in New Jersey. The Senate passed the measure by a vote of 28-3 on June 10.

In testimony before the Assembly Housing and Local Government Committee yesterday, Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs Lori Grifa said the Governor hoped the legislation would be on his desk by the end of June. "The governor's goals are simple," Grifa said. "First, end COAH and the madness of the arbitrary quota system that paid dividends to lawyers and planners, cost towns thousands of dollars, and stymied sensible growth. Second, empower municipalities to make their own decisions about land use and housing on a local level. Third, create clear guidelines for affordable housing that encourage achievable results."

The Assembly Committee spend several hours yesterday taking testimony but did not vote on the legislation. In a statement released prior to the committee hearing, Chairman Jerry Green said, "We are committed to blowing up COAH. We will rid the state of the bureaucratic tangle it has created and implement a new law that will ensure housing is truly affordable across our state. We will by month's end pass legislation extending the moratorium on the 2.5 development fee, thus protecting businesses still struggling through the recession."

Legislation to Reform Regulatory Process Released from Committee

A package of bills designed to reform the regulatory process in New Jersey was released from the Assembly Regulatory Oversight Committee yesterday. The legislation is sponsored by Assemblyman John Burzichelli, chairman of the Committee, who also served on the governor's red tape review panel.

Assembly bill 2720 would establish new procedures in the Administrative Procedure Act to allow substantial changes to agency rule-making upon adoption. **Assembly bill 2721** would amend current law concerning state agency rule-making by changing the chapter expiration dates of rules from five years to 10 years and establishing a new procedure for the re-adoption of rules without substantive changes. **Assembly bill 2722** would modify the process for contested case hearings by the Office of Administrative Law with regard to telephone and video conferences, delegation of final decision authority, oral decisions, checklist decisions, electronic filings and settlements. **Assembly bill 2922** would establish a new procedure for resolving conflicts or inconsistencies in adopted rules and regulations.

Legislation Reinstating Medical Malpractice Liability Insurance Subsidies Released from Committee

The Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee released **Assembly bill 2807** which extends the Medical Malpractice Liability Insurance Premium Assistance Fund for five years and reestablishes the collection of annual surcharges for the fund for the five-year period. The subsidies are funded through an annual surcharge on employers of \$3.00 per employee and an annual assessment of \$75 per year on practicing physicians, podiatrists, chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, and attorneys licensed in this State.

The primary purpose of the fund is to provide medical malpractice liability insurance premium subsidies to health care providers who, as a class of providers, are most severely impacted by high medical malpractice premium rates. In addition, monies from the fund are allocated for various health care purposes, including funds: to the Health Care Subsidy Fund for charity care subsidies to hospitals, to the NJ FamilyCare Program, and to provide student loan expense reimbursement for certain obstetrician/gynecologists.

Legislative Calendar

This week several Assembly and Senate Committees held meetings. Next week, select Senate and Assembly Committees will meet and both the Senate and Assembly will hold voting session on June 21 and June 24. Budget Committees in both houses are likely to meet on June 24 to consider the state budget and budget related measures.