

# Governor Christie Takes Action to Ensure Integrity and Stringent Accountability of Sandy Reconstruction Funding

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## *Governor's Executive Action Directs State Comptroller to Conduct Independent Review of Contracts, Transparency Measures Over Expenditures*

**Trenton, NJ** – Acting to ensure an accountable, transparent process that ensures the integrity of the use of federal reconstruction resources for New Jersey residents and businesses, Governor Chris Christie today signed Executive Order 125 to put in place key review and reporting initiatives. The Governor's action directs the Office of the State Comptroller to conduct an independent, legal review of the procurement process for state contracts using federal reconstruction resources prior to the conclusion of the procurement process. Each department of state government dealing with the disbursement of federal rebuilding aid will also designate an "Accountability Officer" to facilitate work with the Comptroller's Office and interface with the Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding on all reconstruction matters.

In addition, the executive order directs that all such approved contracts be made publically accessible on a State website in coordination with the Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding and the State Comptroller.

"New Jersey has been entrusted with billions of dollars in federal funding so that we can move forward in the storm recovery and rebuilding process. I want everyone to have confidence that those funds are being spent wisely and that contracts are managed properly in every respect, from procurement to execution. To that end, I am putting in place important initiatives and safeguards today to ensure the integrity of this process and to ensure its transparency to the public," said Governor Christie. "As State Comptroller, Matt Boxer has established a record of independence and objectivity to ensure that government at all levels are adhering to a high standard of accountability in the proper use of taxpayer funds. For that reason, his office is perfectly suited for this role."

Under Executive Order 125, each principal department and agency of state government will submit all State procurements for expenditure of federal reconstruction resources to the Office of the State Comptroller for review prior to commencement of the contract procurement process. The State Comptroller shall determine whether the proposed procurement process complies with applicable public contracting laws, rules, and regulations. In the event a proposed procurement process is found inconsistent with the goals of the review, the State Comptroller shall inform the contracting agency, as well as the Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding, of the changes needed to make the process compliant.

To effectuate this review process, both the State Comptroller and each principal department of state government will assign staff to conduct and facilitate this review, respectively. This includes an appropriate number of assigned staff from the Comptroller's Office to thoroughly and expeditiously conduct these procurement reviews, and "Accountability Officers" designated for each principal state department to oversee the responsible disbursement and utilization of federal recovery resources. Accountability Officers' charge will include information sharing and cooperation with the Comptroller's Office to facilitate the review process, while also serving as liaisons to the Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding.

Extending the Christie Administration's record of transparency in government operations and expenditures, the State Comptroller, Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding, and the New Jersey Office of Information Technology will ensure that all approved contracts for the allocation or expenditure of federal reconstruction resources are posted and available to the public on a State website as soon as practicable. The website will also provide information to the public

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with respect to available federal funding streams and funding criteria, the tracking of funding allotment, and contract vendor information.

Further, the State Comptroller will provide information to contracting entities regarding applicable laws, rules, and regulations governing the contracting process to help ensure accountability, transparency, and a timely allocation of rebuilding funds. Every State department and agency shall ensure that fraud prevention notices shall be prominently displayed at all construction projects involving federal reconstruction resources overseen by the department or agency. Such notices shall include the toll-free hotline established by the State Comptroller for reporting of fraud, waste, or abuse of federal reconstruction funds.

A copy of Executive Order 125 [pdf 20kB]

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