

**ASSEMBLY BILL No. 2596**

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 2596 with my recommendations for reconsideration.

Under current law, one and two-family residences must be equipped with smoke alarms on each level, as well as with a portable fire extinguisher. This bill would remove the requirement to maintain a portable fire extinguisher, a change that proponents of the legislation argue will prevent fire-related injuries by encouraging building evacuation as opposed to self-help.

I agree with the sponsors' efforts to reduce unnecessary burdens imposed by government on our State's residents. Indeed, common sense red-tape reform has been a hallmark of my Administration. However, this laudable goal must never cede to issues of public safety. Changing the existing protections against the dangers posed by fires in residential homes raises important issues that should be responsibly and cautiously evaluated.

Accordingly, I recommend that the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs undertake a review of the existing portable fire extinguisher requirements for residences, as well as the other changes proposed in this bill. The Commissioner should develop findings and recommendations on whether revisions to existing laws on fire extinguisher use in residential homes require modification, or repeal. The Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs should report such findings and recommendations directly to me no later than twelve months after the enactment of this bill.

Accordingly, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 2596 and recommend that it be amended as follows:

<u>Page 2, Title, Lines 1-2:</u>	Delete "portable fire extinguishers and amending P.L. 1991, c.92" and insert "a review of New Jersey's requirements for portable fire extinguishers in residences."
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Lines 7-40:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Lines 42-45:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 3, Section 2, Lines 1-23:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 3, Section 3, Lines 25-41:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 3, Line 42:</u>	Insert new section 1: "1. The Commissioner of Community Affairs shall undertake a review of New Jersey's requirements for portable fire extinguishers in residences and accompanying fines and shall report any findings and recommendations directly to the Governor no later than six months from the date of enactment of this act. Specifically, the Commissioner shall examine the impact of, and make recommendations on, the requirements for portable fire extinguishers in residences as they relate to public safety."

Page 3, Section 4, Line 43:

Delete "4" and insert  
"2"

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

[seal]

Attest:

/s/ Charles B. McKenna

Chief Counsel to the Governor