

April 25, 2013

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 61

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 61 without my approval.

This bill seeks to impose oversight upon Superstorm Sandy recovery funds even though such oversight is already in place. While I thank the sponsors for their efforts, and for sharing in my commitment to the transparent and efficient administration of Sandy recovery funding, this bill would produce unnecessary redundancies and waste government resources.

Since Sandy struck, my Administration has prioritized the recovery and rebuilding of New Jersey communities devastated by Sandy in an expeditious and transparent manner. In November 2012, I formed the Office of Recovery and Rebuilding to manage that effort. That office, in conjunction with other state departments and agencies, has worked diligently to oversee and coordinate recovery and rebuilding efforts, making significant progress.

I have also implemented comprehensive and stringent safeguards to ensure that all federal reconstruction resources received by the State are utilized responsibly, transparently, and efficiently. On February 8, 2013, I signed Executive Order No. 125 ordering comprehensive oversight of federal Sandy recovery funds. That Order established an independent, legal review, led by the State Comptroller, of the procurement process for state contracts using federal funds, a network of Accountability Officers across State government to facilitate the review, and a transparency website for all such contracts, relating to Sandy recovery efforts. Building on that commitment to ensure the proper use of taxpayer dollars, I also signed Assembly Bill No. 60, bipartisan legislation providing integrity oversight monitors in the implementation of recovery and rebuilding projects. Collectively, those measures are

designed to ensure the responsible, transparent, and accountable use of taxpayer dollars.

This bill would simply duplicate those efforts. For example, this bill requires the State Treasurer to maintain a transparency website for the administration of Sandy recovery funding even though the State Comptroller already maintains such a transparency website pursuant to my Executive Order. The Comptroller's website accomplishes the same purpose as the bill – to allow the public to track state contracts and expenditures involving federal Sandy-related funding.

Moreover, I am also concerned that the bill tasks the State Treasurer to oversee Sandy recovery funds when I already directed the State Comptroller and the Office of Recovery and Rebuilding to report to me directly on the progress of the independent review process and the transparency website. In my judgment, these teams are better suited to handle that responsibility.

Accordingly, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 61 without my approval.

Respectfully,
/s/ Chris Christie
Governor

[seal]

Attest:

/s/ Charles B. McKenna
Chief Counsel to the Governor