

Governor Phil Murphy

Acting Governor Scutari Signs Bill Establishing Design Professional Self-Certification Program

08/22/2024

TRENTON – Acting Governor Nicholas Scutari today signed [A4360/S3402](https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A4500/4360_R1.PDF) (https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A4500/4360_R1.PDF), also known as the “New Jersey Design Professional Self-Certification Act.” The bill requires the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish a design professional self-certification program.

“As the need for quality development grows within our State, it’s important that design professionals receive the proper certifications and permits in an effective and expeditious manner,” **said Acting Governor Scutari**. “This bill streamlines that process, allowing for construction projects to move forward so that New Jersey can better accommodate the increasing demand for small and large development projects.”

Under the design professional self-certification program, DCA will certify architects and engineers who satisfy certain criteria set by the DCA Commissioner to be “qualified design professionals.” Once approved by DCA, these professionals may self-certify that an application for a construction permit and a project’s plans and specifications comply with the State Uniform Construction Code (UCC) and other applicable laws.

In addition, the bill requires municipal enforcing agencies to accept and review self-certified permit applications and accompanying documents and issue a permit depending on the scope of the project. DCA must establish a self-certification form and publish the form on its website for qualified design professionals to complete, sign, and deliver to the enforcing agency.

The bill also authorizes DCA to conduct random audits of qualified design professionals to determine whether a construction permit application, and plans and other documents submitted in support of the application, comply with the requirements of the UCC and applicable laws.

“New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Division of Codes and Standards stands ready to administer the A4360 legislation that establishes a design professional self-certification program. Under the bill, DCA would establish a program that permits a New Jersey architect or engineer to self-certify an application for a UCC construction permit, and the plans and specifications submitted for limited repair and renovation projects,” **said DCA Commissioner Jacquelyn A. Suárez**. “This is another example of how the Murphy Administration is working to streamline the construction process and respond to the evolving demands in the construction industry to better serve our residents.”

Acting Governor Scutari was a prime sponsor of this bill in his role as Senate President, along with Assemblyman Robert Karabinchak. Other primary sponsors include Senator Paul Sarlo, Assembly Majority Leader Louis Greenwald, and Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli.

“This self-certification program will be beneficial for local government as well as businesses and residents in their communities,” **said Senator Paul Sarlo**. “The complexity of construction practices places a burden on their ability to gain the required approvals for all the codes and standards in a timely way. Empowering the design professionals to oversee the process will help municipalities and other officials to support economic activity and maintain the quality

of life in their communities.”

“Far too often, construction projects get bogged up in permit applications or waiting for the right person to sign off on the necessary paperwork,” **said Assemblyman Robert Karabinchak.** “At a time when we are focused on addressing New Jersey’s housing crisis, this legislation will expedite the approvals process and get things moving faster.”

“We all know how frustrating it is to see construction projects stalled when we desperately need more housing in New Jersey. This bill addresses these challenges by reducing bureaucratic hurdles and acknowledging the expertise of our architects and engineers,” **said Assembly Majority Leader Louis D. Greenwald.** “By allowing certified design professionals to verify a project’s compliance with the State Uniform Construction Code, we can streamline the certification process and ensure these much-needed housing projects move forward in a timely manner.”

“With this legislation, we are enhancing our construction permitting process by enabling certified design professionals to self-certify their plans, streamlining approvals, and minimizing delays for projects that are prepared to move forward,” **said Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli.** “By supporting certified architects and engineers, we ensure that our state’s building projects uphold the highest standards of safety and quality, while also expediting project timelines and improving our infrastructure.”

“This is a very positive law in that it will save time for the business community, but also it will save money for taxpayers. When the Governor, the Legislature and business community can work together to expedite certain building construction without compromising health or safety, it really is a win for everyone. We thank the sponsors and overwhelming support of the Legislature of this bill, as well as Governor Murphy for signing it into law,” **said NJBIA President and CEO Michele Siekerka.**

“NJBA commends Governor Phil Murphy, Senate President Nicolas Scutari and Assemblyman Robert Karabinchak for taking another step to modernize NJ’s building code processes. By empowering qualified experts to self-certify certain building code plans, this new law will leverage the private sector to create additional career and business opportunities and reduce the time and cost to complete residential projects. After successful enactment of the inspection reform law 2 years ago, the Governor and Legislature have once again responsibly reduced regulatory burdens that will in turn help to lower the cost of housing,” **said Jeff Kolakowsk, CEO, NJBA.**

“Communities throughout New Jersey will benefit from this new law because it will remove hurdles to economic development and contribute to the efficient and timely approval of construction projects. NAIOP NJ believes that alleviating costly delays is critical to the success of any commercial real estate development or redevelopment plan. We are especially grateful to the Governor and his team for their support, Assemblyman Robert J. Karabinchak for his vision and tenacity getting this bill to the Governor’s desk, and for Senate President Scutari and Senator Paul A. Sarlo’s leadership on this bill in the Senate,” **said Dan Kennedy, CEO, NAIOP NJ.**

“Economic development projects in New Jersey are often subject to lengthy delays because of outdated and onerous construction permitting processes. This unfairly stalls projects and increases costs for developers. In the meantime, towns and cities miss out on the much-needed tax revenue that result from completed projects. The New Jersey Design Professional Self-Certification Act eliminates an impediment to economic development, while ensuring that projects are reviewed professionally and safely. It also results in our state becoming more business-friendly and helps in our quest to improve our competitiveness,” **said Tom Bracken, President of the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce.**

“The New Jersey Chamber of Commerce thanks Governor Murphy and his team for supporting the bill and we commend Assemblyman Karabinchak, the bill’s prime sponsor. We also acknowledge NJDCA Commissioner Suárez, Senators Scutari and Sarlo and Assemblymen Greenwald and Verrelli for getting this important bill to the finish line,” **said Michael Egenton, Executive Vice President of the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce.**

“We applaud the signing of A-4360,” **said Jerry Keenan, President of the NJ Alliance for Action.** “It continues reforms of the construction regulatory process we have long championed. That translates into more construction jobs that invigorate our economy.”

Governor Phil Murphy

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