

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Gov. Whitman Signs Legislation

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed the following pieces of legislation:

A-1466, sponsored by Assembly Members David Wolfe (R- Monmouth/Ocean) and Jack Gibson (R-Cape May /Atlantic/Cumberland) and Senators Andrew Ciesla (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and Joe Palaia (R- Monmouth), appropriates \$9 million from the 1995 Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation and Blue Acres Bond Act for grants and loans to local government units to acquire storm- damaged coastal properties under the recently-created coastal Blue Acres program.

A-2962, sponsored by Assembly Members Jeffrey Moran (R- Atlantic/Burlington/Ocean) and Christopher Connors (R- Atlantic/Burlington/Ocean) and Senators Joe Bubba (R-Essex/ Passaic) and Leonard Connors (R- Atlantic/Burlington/Ocean), requires criminal history record checks of certain persons seeking to provide care for the elderly. The bill revises previous legislation to ensure more efficient administration of the law. The law requires the completion of a background check prior to certification of nurse aides, personal care assistants or homemaker-home health aides by the Department of Health and Senior Services or the New Jersey Board of Nursing. The affected state agencies and affected businesses believe it is more administratively efficient to conduct the background checks in the context of certification rather than employment.

A-3025, sponsored by Assembly Member Paul DiGaetano (R- Bergen/Essex/Passaic) and Senate President Donald T. DiFrancesco (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union), extends the duration of licenses for stevedores, persons employed in the loading or unloading of ships. The bill extends the licensing period from three to five years.

AJR-54, sponsored by Assembly Member Nicholas Asselta (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland) and Senators Joe Kyrrillos (R- Middlesex/Monmouth) and Leonard Connors (R- Atlantic/Burlington/Ocean), creates a Task Force on the Availability of Homeowners Insurance in the Coastal Region. The 15-member panel will include four legislators representing coastal constituencies, the Commissioners of Banking and Insurance and Community Affairs, and nine public members appointed by the Governor. The task force will review New Jersey's current voluntary program and evaluate its effectiveness. It will also review the success of programs in

other coastal states. The task force will submit its recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature within 180 days after it is organized.

A-824, sponsored by Assembly Member Michael J. Arnone (R- Monmouth), requires each applicant for renewal of a registered municipal clerk certificate to furnish proof of having earned at least two continuing education units in the subject areas related to the statutory duties of the municipal clerk, and minimum contact hours as prescribed by the Director of the Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) in the Department of Community Affairs. A unit of continuing education is equal to 10 contact hours. In addition, the bill amends the previous law by requiring that every municipality appoint or reappoint only those municipal clerks who have obtained certification as registered municipal clerks.

S-96, sponsored by Senator Donald T. DiFrancesco (R- Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union) and Assembly Members Alan M. Augustine (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union) and Anthony R. Bucco (R-Morris), permits the director of the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to refer unpaid surcharges administratively imposed by DMV pursuant to the New Jersey Merit Rating Plan to the comprehensive enforcement program for collection. The comprehensive enforcement program was created by law to provide for the enforcement of court orders and to oversee the collection of court-ordered fines, assessments, surcharges and judgments.

S-1140, sponsored by Senator Richard J. Codey (D-Essex) and Assembly Member LeRoy J. Jones, Jr. (D-Essex), establishes an alternate basis for the calculation of accidental disability retirement allowance for policemen and firemen. Under previous law, the retirement benefit for a policeman or fireman retired on accidental disability was statutorily capped at two thirds of the employee's annual compensation at the time of the accident. The bill amends the law to provide that upon retirement for accidental disability, a policeman or fireman may receive a retirement benefit capped at two thirds of the employee's actual annual compensation either at the time of the accident or at the time of retirement, whichever is larger.

S-2272, sponsored by Senator Martha W. Bark (R- Atlantic/Burlington/Camden) and Assembly Members Jack Gibson (R- Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland) and Larry Chatzidakis (R- Atlantic/Burlington/Camden), continues for another eight years the authority of the Pinelands Development Credit Bank to purchase Pinelands development credits and to extend Pinelands development guarantees. The Pinelands Development Credit Bank acts as a last resort purchaser of Pinelands development credits when a seller is unable to find a private buyer. It was created in order to help control growth in the Pinelands through the purchase and sale of transferable development rights. Under previous law, the Credit Bank's authority would have expired on December 31, 1997. The new expiration date is December 31, 2005.

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