



Governor Phil Murphy

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Newark, N.J.

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Protecting Public Access to Beaches

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TRENTON - Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (S1074) to protect the public's right to access the beaches and waterfronts in New Jersey. This legislation marks the 250th bill signed into law since Governor Murphy took office in January 2018.

The bill enshrines into state law the public trust doctrine, which is a principle that establishes that the State's tidal waters and adjacent shorelines belong to the public to be used for navigation, commerce, and recreation, including bathing, swimming, and fishing.

"New Jersey's shoreline and coastal communities are some of our state's greatest treasures," **said Governor Murphy**. "By strengthening the public's right to access our beaches, we are ensuring that all New Jersey residents and visitors can enjoy our beautiful shore this summer and for generations to come."

The people's ownership of tidal waters and adjacent shorelines is held in trust by the State. This legislation ensures that the State, through the Department of Environmental Protection, protects the public's right of access to public trust lands in the implementation of the Coastal Area Facility Review Act, the Wetlands Act of 1970, the Flood Hazard Area Control Act, the State's implementation of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, or any other law.

The legislation also requires that action taken by the Department of Environmental Protection pursuant to those laws is consistent with the public trust doctrine. Additionally, the legislation requires that the Department of Environmental Protection ensure that any projects completed utilizing public funding overseen by the DEP is consistent with the public trust doctrine.

"Enjoying the shore is one of the best parts of life in New Jersey. As the trustee of the natural resources of the state, I consider it a priority to ensure open and equal access to New Jersey's treasured coastlines for all of our residents," **said Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe**. "I look forward to working with the land use and coastal planning experts at DEP to craft the regulations to implement this important legislation."

Primary sponsors of the bill include Senators Bob Smith and Kip Bateman; and Assemblymembers Nancy J. Pinkin, Andrew Zwicker, and Joann Downey.

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"The public trust doctrine ensures the right for New Jersey residents to have access to its natural resources, beautiful landscapes and natural waters," **said Senator Bob Smith**. "New Jersey's beaches and waterfronts are some of state's most precious environmental assets. The right to access them must be preserved and honored for all residents. The public trust doctrine establishes legal rights of the public to access and use oceanfront property for recreation, navigation and fishing."

"Today's bill signing represents the successful outcome of a bipartisan effort to strengthen the Public Trust Doctrine by putting it in statute, forever protecting the public's right to enjoy the State's rivers and waterfronts," **said Senator Kip Bateman**. "From the beach to the bay, this is a win for all who utilize New Jersey's tidal waters for commerce, fishing, and recreation."

"Generation after generation of New Jersey families as well as visitors from out-of-state spend their summers vacationing at the shore," **said Assemblywoman Nancy Pinkin**. "Although resident access to our beaches is expressed through the public trust doctrine, formally adopting this principle into law will ensure continued respect of residents' rights to access New Jersey's shoreline for recreational purposes and also allow us to further our environmental efforts to protect marine life and endangered species."

"As the state continues to take necessary steps to protect our coastal environment, we have to make sure that the decisions we make in trying to protect our coastline do not come between or inhibit a resident's right to take part in shore activities or simply enjoy the view," **said Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker**. "We can protect our tidal waters, our marine life and still preserve the beautiful beaches and shore communities for which New Jersey is best known."

"The Jersey shore is a source of joy, pride and admiration for residents of our State," **said Assemblywoman Joann Downey**. "Our beautiful coastline belongs to the public, from lifelong New Jerseyans to summer visitors. With this bill, the public's right to the shoreline will continue to be protected for years to come."

"As we get ready for summer and the influx of tourists from around the world coming to enjoy New Jersey's amazing 130-mile coastline, one thing remains clear, our connection to our oceans and waterways is a fundamental part of our lives, our culture, and our economy," **said Ed Potosnak, Executive Director of New Jersey League of Conservation Voters**. "Today, the Governor, continuing to build on his commitment to make New Jersey a stronger and fairer state signed the Beach Access bill into law. The Beach Access Law is a win for all New Jerseyans, it's a win for our waterways and beaches, and it's a win for our economy. We thank Governor Murphy and the New Jersey Legislature for taking this important step."

"We thank Governor Murphy for signing this important legislation. It will strengthen the protection of the public's rights to get to and enjoy NJ's beaches and waterfronts," **said Tim Dillingham, Executive Director of the American Littoral Society**. "It will provide new tools to deal with long standing public access problems. We look forward to working with the administration to getting this law implemented and getting New Jerseyans everywhere to the waters that they have a right to enjoy."

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