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NJMC To Assist Municipalities Provide Affordable Housing

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission held a press conference today to highlight how the NJMC will work in cooperation with District Municipalities to provide sufficient affordable housing in light of a new law signed by Gov. Corzine last week.

“Affordable housing is for people in many economic groups,” said NJMC Chairman Joseph Doria, who is also commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, noting that housing assistance is designed for people who earn 30 to 80 percent of median income – or \$85,000 for a family of four in North Jersey. “It’s for people who have lived in these communities a long time. It’s for their children, who are raised in these communities, so they can stay in the community.”

Signed into law on July 17, A500 established a state-wide fee of 2.5 percent to be charged on non-residential construction to help pay for the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing. It also eliminated the use of Regional Contribution Agreements, which allowed wealthier communities to pay other towns to build affordable housing on their behalf. The state now requires one in five new units to be set aside for affordable housing.

The law also reaffirmed the NJMC’s role as a regional planning agency. The Commission held a June 17 meeting with local mayors to discuss the interim policies it expects to adopt this week, and it has pledged to work in cooperation with District Municipalities to help them meet these new requirements. The interim policies still require all development proposals in the District to be reviewed for their affordable housing potential.

NJMC planners are willing to assist local officials with the process and up to \$45,000 in additional money is available from the Commission for each District municipality to spend on their own affordable housing plans. The Commission also plans to create a seven-member affordable housing task force, which will include local officials and members of the public, to assist in the process.

“Our municipalities need to be a part of the rulemaking process,” said Robert Ceberio, Executive Director of the NJMC. “The new regulations will play a large role in the towns’ future development and it is essential that their views and ideas be heard.”

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