



NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT ONE

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Dear Legislative District 1 Resident,

We want to inform you about a new development that could have a significant impact on our community. As a result of Governor Murphy's Executive Order 100, which directs the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to propose new rules that would expand flood hazard areas and implement stricter building standards across the state, more regulations shall be imposed on residents who live and work in the Coastal Zone. This initiative is part of the NJ PACT/REAL program, which aims to protect against climate threats. It is important to emphasize that the areas classified as coastal zones extend well beyond just barrier islands or properties directly on the water, reaching further inland than many might expect.

While we understand the importance of addressing climate change and the risks it poses to our coastal areas, we are concerned about the potential effects these new rules may have on our residents. These rules could increase construction costs, limit development opportunities, and place additional financial burdens on homeowners.

We believe that any new regulations should be carefully considered and based on a realistic timeframe. The current proposal is based on a 75-year projection of sea level rise, which has a relatively low probability of exceeding the study's predictions. We recommend that the state use a more gradual approach, similar to the 10-year planning horizon that municipalities use for their Master Plans.

We are also concerned that the NJDEP is proposing these rules without the typical legislative process, which means that there has been limited public input. We believe that the people of New Jersey and their elected officials should have a voice in this process, and we are calling on the state to involve the Legislature in enacting these rules.

In addition, we are asking the state to consider the economic and social impacts of these new regulations, particularly on low- and middle-income families. We also request that the state provide funding to help coastal towns implement these rules and support resiliency projects that will likely become more expensive due to the higher standards.

As representatives of Legislative District 1, we are committed to protecting our community and ensuring that any new regulations are fair and reasonable. We will continue to advocate for a balanced approach that takes into account the needs of all residents.

The public comment period for these new regulations started on August 5, 2024, and will conclude on November 3, 2024. Three public hearings are scheduled, starting with an in-person session on September 5, 2024, at 6:00 PM at Ocean County College, Gateway Lecture Hall #104, College Drive, Toms River, NJ 08754. The next two hearings will be held virtually: the first on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at 2:00 PM, and the second on Thursday, September 19, 2024, at 10:00 AM. For more information and to join the virtual sessions, visit the NJDEP website at <https://dep.nj.gov/njreal/hearings>.

Sincerely,

Sen. Michael L. Testa

Assm. Antwan McClellan

Assm. Erik Simonsen