



Legislative Summary

New! A2474, A2974 - Assemblyman Albert Coutinho (D29), Assemblyman Craig Coughlin (D19), Assemblyman Angel Fuentes (D5), Assemblywoman Annette Quijano

The purpose of the two bills is to boost New Jersey's manufacturing industry and create jobs. A2474 provides a corporation business tax credit for certain investments in manufacturing equipment and manufacturing facility renovation, modernization and expansion. A2974 exempts energy and utility service to manufacturing facilities from the sales, use tax and the transitional energy facility assessment unit rate surcharge. Both bills were first introduced and referred to the Assembly Commerce and Economic Development earlier this year. A2474 recently reported out of committee for a second reading in the Assembly, while A2974 reported out of committee and was referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Signed into law! A2036 – Senator Stephen Sweeney (D3)

The “Offshore Wind Economic Development Act”; establishes an offshore wind renewable energy certificate program, and authorizes EDA to provide \$100 million in tax credits for qualified wind energy facilities in wind energy zones. The Act is intended to help the state meet the mandate of its Energy Master Plan, which calls for the development of 3,000 Megawatts of offshore wind by 2020. This bill passed both houses with an overwhelming majority and was recently passed into law by Governor Christie. Following the signing of the Act, DEP Commissioner Bob Martin stated that “the Offshore Wind Economic Development Act makes us a leader environmentally, while at the same time providing New Jersey with a major economic boost from jobs that surely will be created by this green industry”.

Update! S2126 - Senator James Whelan (D2)

The bill permits development of solar and photovoltaic energy facilities and structures over landfills and quarries. It would require the Pinelands Commission to determine that the development of a solar or photovoltaic energy facility on the site of a closed landfill or quarry is conforming to the standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan. The bill passed in the Senate with a unanimous vote. In a press release Senator Whelan noted that by opening up closed landfills for solar farms and wind energy facilities, we stand to make New Jersey a national leader in the clean energy industry.



From the Governor's Desk

NJ Gov Proposes Pension Reforms

Governor Chris Christie proposed a vast package of changes to the state's pension and benefit programs for many current public workers that will shift more costs to employees to help state and local governments cope with looming health and retirement bills.

Speaking at a town-hall style event in Gloucester Township, Christie proposed changes that would affect every public worker - including judges, teachers, police officers and firefighters.

He proposed a variety of reforms, listed below, that he believes are needed to keep the state's pension systems solvent long-term:

- Rolling back a 9.0% benefit increase granted in 2001.
- Requiring public workers to contribute 8.5% of their salaries toward retirement.
- Raising the retirement age for teachers and state workers with less than 25 years in the system to 65.
- Reducing pension payments by 5% for police and firefighters who retire after 25 years.
- Eliminating cost-of-living adjustments to retirees' pensions.
- Increasing contributions employees must make toward their health benefits.

The Governor's proposals would provide more immediate relief for government budgets than an initial package of changes signed earlier this year that mostly affected future hires.



In the News

Lawmakers to Discuss Future of NJN

Lawmakers held the first of three public meetings of the bipartisan Legislative Task Force on Public Broadcasting to hear from invited speakers and the public on the future of New Jersey Network Public Television and Radio. Each meeting of the task force will focus on a distinct topic: an overview of NJN and public media in New Jersey; workforce and labor issues; and NJN programming, assets and related issues.

The 10-member panel was created by a measure after Governor Chris Christie included a provision in the 2011 budget to drastically reduce state funding to the New Jersey Public Broadcasting Authority, the operator of NJN. The governor's spending plan provides funding for NJN through the end of this year.

The task force is charged with issuing a report to the governor and the legislature by October 15. The next hearing is scheduled for Sept. 23 in the Montclair council chambers.