

## Legislative Summary

The State Legislature is currently in the process of holding hearings aimed at reviewing the Governor's proposed FY 2012 budget. As such, there has been no new legislative action undertaken since the "Budget Break" began late last month. The Senate is scheduled to return to action on April 28, 2011 and the Assembly on May 5, 2011.

### **State Budget**

The Senate Budget and Appropriation Committee chaired by Senator Paul Sarlo (D-36) met Monday, March 28, 2011 to discuss the 2012 fiscal year budget. Included in the discussion was the 2012 fiscal overview and revenue forecast presentation by Mr. David J. Rosen, Budget Financial Officer from the Office of Legislative Services (OLS). Some highlights of the proposal include:

- The FY2012 budget proposal continues Governor Christie's actions and policy decisions that began during FY2011.
- The FY2012 budget proposal resembles budgets of previous years with small increases to account for the rebounding economy and projected growth of the State.
- The closing of the current FY2011 budget on June 30 should result in a surplus of \$349 million.
- OLS projects 4% growth in overall revenue within the State.
  - OLS and the Governor's Office differ on where the revenue will be derived.
- OLS is taking a slightly more conservative stance than the Front Office with lower estimates on insurance premiums, realty transfer fees, motor fuels, and bank and financial taxes.

## From the Governor's Desk

### *Update! A2849 - Asm. John Burzichelli (D-3)*

This bill requires the Board of Public Utilities ("board") to issue every order in written form. However, if a matter is an emergency that affects public health and safety, the bill allows the board to issue a temporary order on the matter orally, but requires the board within 14 days thereafter to issue the order as a written order that does not differ substantively from the oral order. Any board order issued orally may be made effective immediately, but, regardless of its effective date, if that order is not issued in written form within 14 calendar days thereafter, or the written order is substantively different from the oral order, the oral order shall be void and of no effect as of the 15th calendar day after its issuance.



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*April 2011*

**Legislative  
Dispatch**

**3,700 SQUARE MILES OF OPPORTUNITY**

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The bill also clarifies that the board issues written orders by filing a copy with the board secretary. Lastly, as amended, the bill requires all written board orders to be posted on the board's Internet website. The bill has passed both the Senate and Assembly and was sent to the Governor's Desk where it awaits final action.

### *Pinelands solar, wind bill receives Senate vote*

The bill directs State and local agencies that issue permits to businesses related to economic development to streamline the process by which the permits are issued to such businesses and monitored for compliance. The bill has passed both the House and the Senate and was sent to the Governor's desk. On March 3, the Governor signed the measure into law-P.L.2001 c.34.

### *Update! A3584 - Shelia Oliver (D-34), Joseph Cryan (D-20), Paul Moriarty (D-4)*

Gov. Christie conditionally vetoed a bill that would allow for solar or wind facilities on landfills in the Pinelands early last month. Recently the Senate voted to concur with the Governor's recommendations for the bill--sending the measure back to the Governor's desk where it awaits action.

The legislation, S2126, whose primary sponsors include Sen. Jim Whelan, (D-2), would require the Pinelands Commission to draw up regulations for developing solar or photovoltaic energy facilities on landfills within the Pinelands. Gov. Chris Christie, in issuing his veto, expressed concerns after hearing from both the commission and primary sponsors about changes that were needed, including limiting projects to locations that are already considered "disturbed" locations that already had been put to use as landfills.

"Nobody wants to see solar panels rise on forests," said Pinelands Commission spokesman Paul Leakan. "Nobody wants to see trees come down. We want to see that these are limited to areas that are already disturbed and cleared." Previously, Whelan had estimated that there are approximately 80 unused landfills within the Pinelands preservation area. And Leakan pointed out that many of them are uncapped, which is expensive to do, and so one of the upsides of the bill is that alternative-energy sites may generate funds that can be used to cap the landfills.

According to the Pinelands Preservation Commission, the state-protected areas affected by this legislation total about 927,000 acres over seven counties. In addition to capping old sites, Leakan explained that the bill and the commission regulations would help reduce the use of fossil fuels in the environmentally sensitive region.

*The state Pinelands region includes about 1,449 square miles, or nearly one-fifth of the total area of New Jersey.*



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## *In the News*

### **Connors & Van Drew named to South Jersey "Veterans' Hospital Task Force" Bill Now Law**

In a jointly issued statement, Senator Jeff Van Drew and Senator Christopher J. Connors of the 1st and 9th Legislative Districts announced that they have been appointed by the Senate legislative leadership to serve on the "New Jersey Veterans' Hospital Task Force," which was established through legislation recently signed into law by Governor Christie.

Senators Van Drew and Connors, who both serve on the Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee, were the prime sponsors of the legislative initiative to form the Task Force, which will be charged with studying, evaluating and developing recommendations relating to the construction and operation of a veterans' health care facility in southern New Jersey.

More specifically within the context of the Task Force's responsibilities, specific focus will be placed on:

- estimating the capital, operational and administrative expenses associated with establishing a new facility or contracting with an existing facility;
- reviewing data on the number of veterans residing in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties and the number of veterans receiving medical services at hospitals within those counties in the past five years;
- reviewing various methods of financing a new facility through public and private partnerships; and
- investigating opportunities for the State to enter into collaborative agreements with the federal government to ensure the most efficient use of funds and resources.