

Legislative Summary

Legislation Officially Creating NJ Business Action Center Clears Committee

Legislation sponsored by Senator Fred Madden (D-Gloucester, Camden) that would officially create the New Jersey Business Action Center cleared the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee today.

The bill, S3079, is also co-sponsored by Senator Steve Oroho (R-Sussex, Hunterdon, Morris). Though the Center was created last year, it was never officially done so by statute. Doing so now will help codify much of the work the Center has and will continue to do. The Center serves as a liaison to the business community and provides information on: state taxes; permits, licenses, certificates, other governmental approvals; state regulations; available commercial real estate, and international trade.

Additionally, the legislation would expand the services that the Center must provide, including information on industry trends and forecasts, market size and sales, market demographics and psychographics, market research reports, potential market niches, prospective partners and resources, and marketing lists and leads and other information as requested by the businesses. The Center would be required to provide this information in a confidential manner and would ban disclosure of any information acquired about a business during the course of providing such confidential business consulting services.

S3079 now heads to the full Senate for consideration.

Bill Provides Tax Incentives for Loans to Businesses in UEZs

Legislation sponsored by Senator Sean T. Kean (R-11) that would establish a tax deduction for loans provided to businesses located in Urban Enterprise Zones (UEZs) was recently approved by the New Jersey Senate.

"Many of our urban centers have been hit especially hard during this economic crisis," added Kean. "In the best of times, businesses located in Urban Enterprise Zones have great difficulty obtaining the loans that they need to build and expand. In today's tough economy, it can be nearly impossible for urban businesses to obtain the capital they need to survive."

The legislation, S1885, would make it easier for those businesses to obtain the financial resources they need by establishing a five-year tax deduction for taxpayers that provide loans to businesses located in UEZs. The deduction applies to taxpayers subject to the corporation business tax or the gross income tax.

The interest on loans would be deductible if the borrower is located solely within a UEZ, if the loan is used solely in connection with activity within the UEZ, and if the lender has no equity or other ownership interest in the borrower. To qualify, loans would have to be provided at the prevailing market rate or less.

The sponsor noted that many Urban Enterprise Zones are underserved by financial institutions, making it harder for local business owners to walk into a neighborhood bank to apply for a loan.

The measure passed the full Senate and now heads to the Assembly for consideration.

Bill to Create Jobs Through Solar Project Development Clears Senate Committee

Legislation sponsored by Senator Donald Norcross (D-5) to provide greater opportunities for the development of solar facilities in New Jersey by streamlining state rules governing the industry was approved recently by the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

"This bill will create good-paying construction jobs, as well as green jobs for our residents, at a time when they are desperately needed. It will allow stalled projects to move forward so we can begin to produce more clean solar energy," said Senator Norcross. "New Jersey has been a leader in solar production and this initiative will help to keep us on the cutting edge."

The legislation will help projects such as the one proposed at the Gloucester Marine Terminal in Gloucester City – which with 1.1 million square feet of expected solar panels would be the largest rooftop solar installation in North America – become a reality.

The bill, S2942, would facilitate the market for solar renewable energy certificates (SRECs) by clarifying that a solar facility connected to the electric grid at up to 69 kilovolts can earn the certificates.

Currently, in order for a facility to be eligible to earn SRECs, it must be "connected to the distribution system." However, the BPU defines the term differently for each electric public utility. A solar project in the Atlantic City Electric service territory, for example, is currently required to connect to the utility's 12 kilovolt local distribution lines, which has led to a bottleneck. The bill would allow solar installations to connect to the utility's 69 kilovolt lines and still be eligible for SRECs, thereby freeing up opportunities for more projects to move forward.

The measure now heads to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for consideration.



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News From The Governor's Desk

New Law Will Return New Jersey to a Single June Primary Election—Estimated Cost Savings of Over \$10 Million

Demonstrating a commitment to New Jersey's state and local taxpayers, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno recently signed bipartisan legislation to provide for a single June primary election in 2012, inclusive of New Jersey's presidential primary.

The bill eliminated an additional, stand-alone presidential primary election in February, providing for the election of delegates and alternates to political party national conventions to occur at the regular June primary election. State and local governments are anticipated to experience total savings of approximately \$12 million, primarily from the elimination of costs such as poll worker salaries, ballot printing and postage, polling place rental and other election-related costs.

"During 'Super Tuesday' in February 2008, New Jersey was among 24 other states that held their presidential primaries and caucuses. The benefits to New Jersey of holding a stand-alone election in February for the presidential primary were offset by the number of other states that opted for an early February primary, as well as the additional cost to taxpayers of holding a separate election," said Acting Governor Kim Guadagno, who also serves as the Secretary of State. "Returning our state to a single June primary election in 2012 is a commonsense move that will provide meaningful savings to the state and local taxpayers without diminishing New Jersey's role in the presidential nomination process."

Acting Governor Guadagno also noted the ease and convenience of the vote-by-mail process in New Jersey. Registered voters across the state can vote-by-mail for any reason for municipal, county, state and federal offices by completing a downloadable application off the Division of Elections website at www.NJElections.org. Applications are available in both English and Spanish, and must be received by the resident's County Clerk seven days prior to the election. A voter may also apply in-person to the County Clerk until 3:00 p.m. the day prior to an election. The deadline to register for the upcoming November 8 general election is October 18.