

[Second Reprint]  
**SENATE, No. 2825**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**216th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED MARCH 12, 2015

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator STEPHEN M. SWEENEY**  
**District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)**  
**Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN**  
**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**  
**Assemblyman VINCENT MAZZEO**  
**District 2 (Atlantic)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

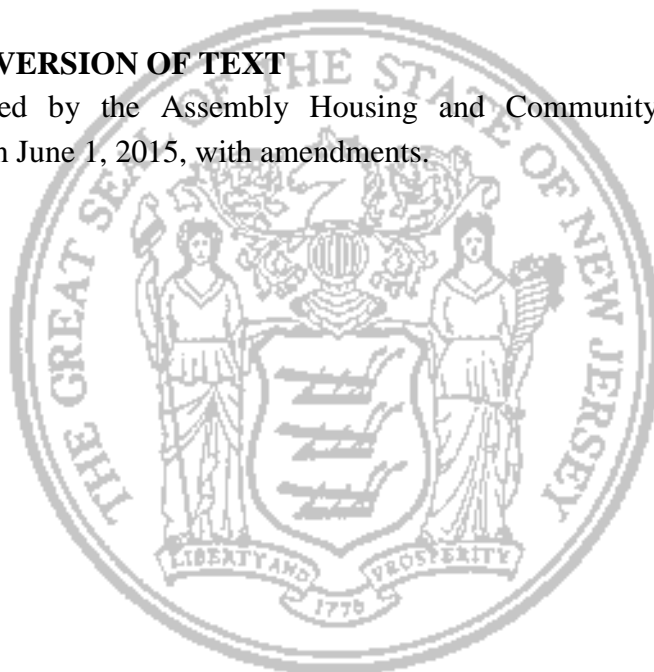
**Senator Gordon**

**SYNOPSIS**

Increases efficiency and transparency in distribution of Superstorm Sandy aid money.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee on June 1, 2015, with amendments.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/26/2015)**

1 AN ACT concerning efficiency and transparency in the distribution  
 2 of Superstorm Sandy aid money and supplementing Title 52 of  
 3 the Revised Statutes.

4  
 5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
 6 *of New Jersey:*

7  
 8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 In the autumn of 2012, Superstorm Sandy ravaged New Jersey's  
 10 shoreline, as well as many other communities in the State. The  
 11 storm destroyed or damaged more than 72,000 of the State's homes  
 12 and businesses, has driven more than a quarter-million State  
 13 residents to seek governmental assistance, and has resulted in more  
 14 than \$36 billion in damage and recovery needs. In addition, due to  
 15 the time it has taken to distribute recovery aid following Superstorm  
 16 Sandy, many of those affected by the storm now face the reality of  
 17 foreclosure on their home mortgages. While New Jersey  
 18 communities have taken certain important steps toward recovery,  
 19 the work to rebuild is not yet complete.

20 Recognizing that there are numerous challenges associated with  
 21 the efficient and expedient distribution of federal recovery  
 22 resources following a disaster of the scale of Superstorm Sandy, the  
 23 processes for individuals and communities to obtain governmental  
 24 assistance has not been as fast as the Governor and the Legislature  
 25 would like, and can be improved. Although the reasons for delays in  
 26 obtaining assistance vary, the State has an obligation to those  
 27 affected by the storm to make the process of obtaining benefits as  
 28 user friendly and transparent as possible. For these reasons and  
 29 others, it is necessary for the Governor and the Legislature to codify  
 30 and expand upon standards and safeguards for the treatment of  
 31 individuals and communities seeking financial assistance in  
 32 recovering from Superstorm Sandy.

33  
 34 2. As used in P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the  
 35 Legislature as this bill):

36 <sup>1</sup>"Agency" means the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage  
 37 Finance Agency established pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1983,  
 38 c.530 (C.55:14K-4).<sup>1</sup>

39 "Applicant" means an individual <sup>2</sup>**[.]<sup>2</sup> or business that has  
 40 applied for, <sup>1</sup>**[is applying for]** is waiting for<sup>1</sup>, or is receiving  
 41 benefits under a recovery and rebuilding program <sup>2</sup>, and shall  
 42 include individuals who are awaiting the completion of a  
 43 construction project using benefits received under a recovery and  
 44 rebuilding program<sup>2</sup>.**

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Senate SBA committee amendments adopted May 14, 2015.

<sup>2</sup>Assembly AHO committee amendments adopted June 1, 2015.

1 "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Community  
2 Affairs.

3 "Department" means the Department of Community Affairs.

4 "FRM" means the Fund for Restoration of Multifamily Housing.

5 "Qualified contractor pool" means a listing of contractors  
6 approved by the Department of Community Affairs participating in  
7 the RREM program.

8 <sup>2</sup> "LMI" means Low-to-Moderate Income and the program for  
9 which policies and procedures have been adopted by the  
10 Department of Community Affairs.<sup>2</sup>

11 "Recovery and rebuilding program" means the use of funding  
12 provided by the federal government <sup>1</sup> **[**, in an amount \$10 million or  
13 greater,**]**<sup>1</sup> for <sup>1</sup> **[a]** the RREM<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> **[program]** and LMI programs<sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup>,  
14 which <sup>2</sup> **[is**<sup>1</sup> **]** are<sup>2</sup> intended to help individuals <sup>1</sup> **[and businesses]**<sup>1</sup>  
15 rebuild and recover from Superstorm Sandy, <sup>1</sup> **[including, but not**  
16 limited to, the FRM and RREM programs] the TBRA program,  
17 which is intended to assist renters in returning to and residing in  
18 areas impacted by Superstorm Sandy, and the FRM program, which  
19 is intended to assist developers in repairing or replacing rental  
20 housing units damaged or destroyed by Superstorm Sandy<sup>1</sup>.

21 "RREM" means <sup>1</sup> **[the]**<sup>1</sup> Reconstruction, Rehabilitation,  
22 Elevation and Mitigation <sup>1</sup> **[Program]**<sup>1</sup>.

23 <sup>1</sup> "TBRA" means Tenant-Based Rental Assistance.<sup>1</sup>  
24

25 3. Within <sup>1</sup> **[30]** 60<sup>1</sup> days of the effective date of P.L. ,  
26 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the  
27 department shall:

28 a. <sup>1</sup> **[Develop a]** Provide each applicant to the RREM and LMI  
29 <sup>2</sup> **[program]** programs<sup>2</sup> with a personal<sup>1</sup> timeline setting forth a  
30 general estimation of the time in which an applicant can expect to  
31 receive assistance through <sup>1</sup> **[a recovery and rebuilding program]**  
32 the RREM <sup>2</sup> program and LMI<sup>2</sup> program and a reasonable estimate  
33 of when the applicant can expect completion of the project for  
34 which they have requested assistance<sup>1</sup>, based upon the department's  
35 past experience administering funds through <sup>1</sup> **[recovery and**  
36 rebuilding programs] the RREM <sup>2</sup> program<sup>2</sup> and LMI program<sup>1</sup>.  
37 The timeline shall track the process of applying for assistance from  
38 <sup>1</sup> **[a recovery and rebuilding program]** the RREM <sup>2</sup> and LMI<sup>2</sup>  
39 programs<sup>1</sup> from the time an applicant files his or her application  
40 with the department through the completion of the project for which  
41 the applicant requested assistance <sup>1</sup>, and shall include:

42 (1) When the applicant should expect to receive 50 percent of  
43 the RREM grant money that the department has awarded the  
44 applicant; and

1       (2) When the applicant should expect to receive 100 percent of  
2 the RREM<sup>2</sup> and LMI<sup>2</sup> grant money that the department has awarded  
3 the applicant<sup>1</sup>.

4       b. <sup>1</sup>Develop and provide to each applicant for assistance from  
5 the RREM program a timeline setting forth an estimation of the  
6 time in which the applicant can expect to receive assistance through  
7 the RREM program that includes the following information as to his  
8 or her individual application:

9       (1) When the applicant should expect to receive 50 percent of  
10 the RREM grant money that the department has awarded the  
11 applicant;

12       (2) When the applicant should expect to receive 100 percent of  
13 the RREM grant money that the department has awarded the  
14 applicant;

15       (3) When the applicant should expect the construction or  
16 elevation project for which the department disbursed grant money  
17 will be completed in compliance with all applicable local, State, and  
18 federal building codes and regulations; and

19       (4) When the applicant should expect to receive a final  
20 certificate of occupancy and grant closeout<sup>1</sup> Provide each applicant  
21 to the RREM<sup>2</sup> program and LMI<sup>2</sup> program with information about  
22 the status of his or her individual application, including:

23       (1) the date on which the department received the application;

24       (2) a list of all required documents or other verifications  
25 submitted by the applicant related to the application and the date on  
26 which the department received each document; and

27       (3) a list of all documents or other verifications which still need  
28 to be submitted by the applicant in order to complete the RREM  
29 <sup>2</sup>application and LMI<sup>2</sup> application and the date on which each item  
30 must be received.

31       c. Upon request from an applicant to the RREM<sup>2</sup> program and  
32 LMI<sup>2</sup> program appealing a decision to deny the applicant benefits  
33 under the program, provide to the applicant information about the  
34 status of his or her appeal, including:

35       (1) the date on which the applicant filed the appeal;

36       (2) all pending reviews of the appeal and the date of any  
37 upcoming hearings related to the appeal;

38       (3) the department's final determination, if one is made as of the  
39 date the request for information is fulfilled, or otherwise the date on  
40 which the applicant can expect that the department will make a final  
41 determination concerning the appeal; and

42       (4) a list of all documents related to the appeal and the date on  
43 which each document was filed.

44       d. In the event the department denies an appeal by a RREM<sup>2</sup> or  
45 LMI<sup>2</sup> applicant, the department shall refer the applicant to a  
46 housing<sup>2</sup> professional at the State housing recovery center serving  
47 the area in which the applicant resides<sup>1</sup> counselor who is certified

1 by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development or is  
 2 part of a program established by the department to provide housing  
 3 counseling to people impacted by Superstorm Sandy<sup>2</sup> .  
 4

5 4. Within <sup>1</sup>~~30~~ 60<sup>1</sup> days of the effective date of P.L. ,  
 6 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the  
 7 department shall<sup>1</sup>:

8 a. Develop<sup>1</sup> ~~develop~~ develop<sup>1</sup> targets for the distribution of assistance  
 9 to <sup>1</sup>~~homeowners and renters for reimbursements and repairs~~  
 10 homeowner and renter applicants<sup>1</sup> through recovery and rebuilding  
 11 programs. The department shall establish quarterly goals detailing  
 12 the amount of assistance that the department intends to disburse  
 13 through recovery and rebuilding programs. These goals shall be  
 14 based upon the department's past experience administering funds  
 15 through recovery and rebuilding programs and the experience of  
 16 other states that have distributed federal funds for disaster recovery.

17 <sup>1</sup>~~b.~~ Develop special targets for the RREM program that, at a  
 18 minimum, ~~At a minimum, the targets shall~~<sup>1</sup> provide for <sup>1</sup>~~all~~ the  
 19 majority of eligible RREM<sup>1</sup> applicants to receive 50 percent or  
 20 more of RREM program funding that the department has awarded  
 21 them by <sup>1</sup>~~October 29, 2015~~ December 31, 2015<sup>1</sup> and for all  
 22 <sup>1</sup>eligible RREM<sup>1</sup> applicants to <sup>1</sup>~~have completed RREM-funded~~  
 23 construction and elevation projects, which meet all applicable local,  
 24 State, and federal building codes and regulations, by October 29,  
 25 2016 ~~receive 100 percent of RREM program funding by~~  
 26 September 30, 2017, provided that all funding distributions comply  
 27 with applicable State and federal laws and regulations<sup>1</sup> .  
 28

29 5. a. Within <sup>1</sup>~~60~~ 180<sup>1</sup> days of the effective date of P.L. ,  
 30 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the  
 31 department shall develop and maintain an Internet website or  
 32 webpage providing information concerning recovery and rebuilding  
 33 programs. <sup>1</sup>~~The information on the website shall be searchable~~  
 34 and available as an interactive database, and shall ~~At a minimum,~~  
 35 the website shall<sup>1</sup>:

36 (1) Allow <sup>1</sup>~~verified residents of the State to create an account~~  
 37 with the website that allows the resident to monitor the status of his  
 38 or her application for assistance from a recovery and rebuilding  
 39 program ~~an applicant to a recovery and rebuilding program to~~  
 40 submit securely through the website a request for specific  
 41 information on the current status of his or her application for  
 42 assistance from a recovery and rebuilding program, to which the  
 43 department shall respond by phone or by email within two business  
 44 days<sup>1</sup> .

45 (2) Provide a plain language explanation of every recovery and  
 46 rebuilding program, all requirements to apply for and receive

1 benefits, how to file appeals, and a description of the process  
2 necessary to correct any deficiency with an application.

3 (3) <sup>1</sup>Provide information about the status of individual  
4 applications submitted for assistance from a recovery and  
5 rebuilding program, including:

6 (a) the date that the application was received;

7 (b) a checklist of all required documents or other verifications  
8 related to the application and the date on which each document was  
9 received; and

10 (c) a list of all documents or other verifications still needed to  
11 complete the application and the date by which each item must be  
12 received.

13 (4) Provide a comprehensive list of all pending and completed  
14 appeals to the department concerning the denial of assistance or the  
15 manner in which the department distributes assistance from  
16 recovery and rebuilding programs, including:

17 (a) the date that the appeal was filed;

18 (b) a list of all documents related to the appeal and the date on  
19 which each document was filed;

20 (c) a list of all pending reviews of appeals and any upcoming  
21 hearings related to recovery and rebuilding programs scheduled  
22 before the department; and

23 (d) the department's final determination.

24 (5)<sup>1</sup> Provide contact information for each builder in the  
25 qualified contractor pool, including each builder's telephone number  
26 and Internet website address <sup>1</sup>, and identify any builders that have  
27 been removed from the qualified contractor pool<sup>1</sup>.

28 <sup>1</sup>[(6)] (4)<sup>1</sup> Provide and update information regarding the  
29 expenditure of recovery and rebuilding program funds and related  
30 contracts on the Internet website on a monthly basis. A full and  
31 current explanation of the criteria and process by which recovery  
32 and rebuilding program applications are prioritized shall also appear  
33 on the website. Changes to program policy, information on new  
34 contractor awards, and the status of work performed pursuant to the  
35 contractor awards shall be posted on the Internet website.

36 <sup>1</sup>[(7)] (5)<sup>1</sup> Provide information on how all recovery and  
37 rebuilding program funding has been and will be allocated on the  
38 Internet website, including information about the allocation process  
39 for all rounds of funding distribution <sup>1</sup>; and:

40 (a) the total number of applications submitted for recovery and  
41 rebuilding program funding;

42 (b) the number of applicants that have received 50 percent or  
43 more of the recovery and rebuilding program grant money that the  
44 department has awarded them;

45 (c) the number of applicants that have received 100 percent of  
46 the recovery and rebuilding program grant money that the  
47 department has awarded them;

1        (d) the number of applicants that have completed recovery and  
2 rebuilding program-funded construction or elevation projects in  
3 compliance with local, State, and federal building codes and  
4 regulations; and

5        (e) the number of applicants that have received a final certificate  
6 of occupancy and grant closeout<sup>1</sup>.

7        <sup>1</sup>[(8) Provide information on how RREM program funding has  
8 been and will be allocated on the Internet website, including:

9        (a) the total number of applications submitted for RREM  
10 funding;

11        (b) the number of applicants that has received 50 percent or  
12 more of the RREM grant money that the department has awarded  
13 them;

14        (c) the number of applicants that has received 100 percent of the  
15 RREM grant money that the department has awarded them;

16        (d) the number of applicants that has completed RREM-funded  
17 construction or elevation projects in compliance with local, State,  
18 and federal building codes and regulations; and

19        (e) the number of applicants that has received a final certificate  
20 of occupancy and grant closeout.]<sup>1</sup>

21        b. The department shall develop and publish on the Internet  
22 website <sup>1</sup>a description of how it developed<sup>1</sup> the <sup>1</sup>[[timeline]  
23 timelines<sup>1</sup> for the disbursement of recovery and rebuilding program  
24 assistance developed pursuant to <sup>1</sup>[[section 3] sections 3, 7, and 8<sup>1</sup>  
25 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).  
26 The department shall <sup>1</sup>[[make available on its Internet website  
27 individualized timelines for the disbursement of RREM program  
28 funding, developed pursuant to section 3 of P.L. , c. (C. )  
29 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), which applicants may  
30 access through their personal accounts with the website]<sup>1</sup> allow an  
31 applicant to request his or her individualized timeline for the  
32 disbursement of program funding, developed pursuant to sections 3,  
33 7, and 8 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as  
34 this bill), through the website<sup>1</sup>.

35        c. The department shall publish on the Internet website its  
36 quarterly goals for the disbursement of recovery and rebuilding  
37 program assistance developed pursuant to section 4 of P.L. ,

38 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). <sup>1</sup>[[The  
39 department shall publish its goals for the disbursement of RREM  
40 program funding, developed pursuant to section 4 of P.L. ,  
41 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).]<sup>1</sup>

42        d. The department shall publish on the Internet website the  
43 commissioner's report on the use of Community Development  
44 Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds and other funds that may be  
45 available for similar purposes for interim assistance submitted to  
46 the Governor and Legislature pursuant to section 6 of P.L. ,  
47 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

1 e. In addition to publishing the information as required in  
2 subsections a. through d. of this section, the department may  
3 distribute the information by any other method it deems  
4 appropriate.

5  
6 6. a. Within <sup>1</sup>~~30~~<sup>60</sup> days of the effective date of P.L. ,  
7 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the  
8 commissioner shall report to the Governor and the Legislature,  
9 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), regarding  
10 the allocation of Community Development Block Grant Disaster  
11 Recovery funds and other funds that may be available for relief  
12 efforts associated with Superstorm Sandy. The commissioner shall  
13 evaluate and determine the extent to which the department may  
14 provide unused Community Development Block Grant Disaster  
15 Recovery funds and other funds that may be available for similar  
16 purposes to persons, who have submitted an application for  
17 assistance from a recovery and rebuilding program that is still  
18 pending before the department, as interim assistance for the  
19 applicants' mortgage payments and rent. If the commissioner  
20 determines that utilizing unused Community Development Block  
21 Grant Disaster Recovery funds, other funds that may be available  
22 for similar purposes, or both, for interim assistance is inappropriate,  
23 then the commissioner shall issue a report to the Governor and the  
24 Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-  
25 19.1), detailing why the use of these funds for interim assistance is  
26 inappropriate. If the commissioner determines that utilizing unused  
27 Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds,  
28 other funds that may be available for similar purposes, or both, for  
29 interim assistance is appropriate, then the commissioner shall issue  
30 a report to the Governor and the Legislature, pursuant to section 2  
31 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), establishing a strategy for the  
32 rapid disbursement of unused Community Development Block  
33 Grant Disaster Recovery funds, other funds that may be available  
34 for similar purposes, or both, for interim assistance.

35 b. The report required by this section shall include:

36 (1) an estimate of the total need for interim assistance among  
37 persons who have submitted an application for assistance from a  
38 recovery and rebuilding program that is still pending before the  
39 department;

40 (2) the portion of the total need for interim assistance that the  
41 department intends to meet through the rapid disbursement of  
42 unused Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery  
43 funds and other funds that may be available for similar purposes;

44 (3) the portion of the total need for interim assistance that the  
45 department intends not to meet through the rapid disbursement of  
46 unused Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery  
47 funds and other funds that may be available for similar purposes;  
48 and



1 (4) the means by which the department will decide which  
2 applicants will receive interim assistance if the department  
3 determines that it cannot satisfy the full need for interim assistance  
4 among persons who have submitted an application for assistance  
5 from a recovery and rebuilding program that is still pending before  
6 the department.

7  
8 17. Within 60 days of the effective date of P.L. , c. (C. )  
9 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the department shall:

10 a. Provide each applicant to the TBRA program with a timeline  
11 setting forth a general estimation of the time in which an applicant  
12 can expect to receive assistance through the TBRA program, based  
13 upon the department's past experience administering funds through  
14 the TBRA program. The timeline shall track the process of  
15 applying for assistance from the TBRA program from the time an  
16 applicant files his or her application.

17 b. Provide each applicant to the TBRA program with  
18 information about the status of his or her individual application,  
19 including:

20 (1) the date on which the department received the application;

21 (2) a list of all required documents or other verifications  
22 submitted by the applicant related to the application and the date on  
23 which the department received each document; and

24 (3) a list of all documents or other verifications which still need  
25 to be submitted by the applicant in order to complete the TBRA  
26 application and the date on which each item must be received.

27 c. Upon request from an applicant to the TBRA program  
28 appealing a decision to deny the applicant benefits under the  
29 program, provide to the applicant information about the status of his  
30 or her appeal, including:

31 (1) the date on which the applicant filed the appeal;

32 (2) all pending reviews of the appeal and the date of any  
33 upcoming hearings related to the appeal;

34 (3) the department's final determination, if one is made as of the  
35 date the request for information is fulfilled, or otherwise the date on  
36 which the applicant can expect that the department will make a final  
37 determination concerning the appeal; and

38 (4) a list of all documents related to the appeal and the date on  
39 which each document was filed.

40 d. In the event the department denies an appeal by a TBRA  
41 applicant, the department shall refer the applicant to a housing  
42 <sup>2</sup>professional at the State housing recovery center serving the area  
43 in which the applicant resides<sup>1</sup> counselor who is certified by the  
44 federal Department of Housing and Urban Development or is part  
45 of a program established by the department to provide housing  
46 counseling to people impacted by Superstorm Sandy<sup>2</sup>.

1 <sup>1</sup>8. Within 60 days of the effective date of P.L. , c. (C. )  
2 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the agency shall, at the  
3 request of the applicant:

4 a. Provide each applicant to the FRM program with a timeline  
5 setting forth a general estimation of the time in which an applicant  
6 can expect to receive assistance through the FRM program, based  
7 upon the agency's past experience administering funds through the  
8 FRM program. The timeline shall track the process of applying for  
9 assistance from the FRM program from the time an applicant files  
10 his or her application.

11 b. Provide each applicant to the FRM program with information  
12 about the status of his or her individual application, including;

13 (1) the date on which the application was received;

14 (2) a list of all required documents or other verification  
15 submitted by the applicant related to the application and the date on  
16 which the agency received each document; and

17 (3) a list of all documents or other verifications which still need  
18 to be submitted by the applicant in order to complete the FRM  
19 application and the date on which each item must be received.

20 c. Provide to each applicant to the FRM program appealing a  
21 decision to deny the applicant benefits under the program  
22 information about the status of his or her appeal, including:

23 (1) the date on which the applicant filed the appeal;

24 (2) all pending reviews of the appeal and the date of any  
25 upcoming hearings related to the appeal;

26 (3) the agency's final determination, if one is made as of the date  
27 the request for information is fulfilled, or otherwise the date on  
28 which the applicant can expect that the agency will make a final  
29 determination concerning the appeal; and

30 (4) a list of all documents related to the appeal and the date on  
31 which each document was filed.

32 d. In the event the agency denies an appeal by a FRM applicant,  
33 the agency shall refer the applicant to a housing professional at the  
34 State housing recovery center serving the area in which the  
35 applicant resides.<sup>1</sup>

36  
37 <sup>1</sup>9. Within 60 days of the effective date of P.L. , c. (C. )  
38 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the department shall  
39 establish a telephone hotline available, at a minimum, weekdays  
40 between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. through which applicants may  
41 request the general or individualized information that the  
42 department and agency must provide pursuant to P.L. , c. (C. )  
43 (pending before the Legislature as this bill).<sup>1</sup>

44  
45 <sup>1</sup>10. The department shall not, to the full extent permitted by  
46 federal law or regulation, deem any National Flood Insurance  
47 Program claim payments to any National Flood Insurance Program  
48 policy holder made on or after May 18, 2015 to be a duplication of

1 benefits of any federal grant award, or to require any other  
2 reduction of a previously determined grant or benefit to an applicant  
3 based on such payments. The department shall take available steps,  
4 including the submission of a waiver request to the United States  
5 Department of Housing and Urban Development or the Federal  
6 Emergency Management Agency, if either agency legally can grant  
7 such a waiver, in order to ensure that National Flood Insurance  
8 Program claim payments made on or after May 18, 2015 do not  
9 operate as a duplication of benefits with any existing federal grant  
10 award, or otherwise reduce the amount of an applicant's award.<sup>1</sup>

11

12 <sup>1</sup>**[7.] 11.**<sup>1</sup> This act shall take effect immediately.