

# SENATE, No. 150

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator HOLLY T. SCHEPISI**

**District 39 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**Senator ROBERT W. SINGER**

**District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Cardinale**

**SYNOPSIS**

Authorizes municipal challenge to non-redevelopment housing projects ordered by COAH unless order is based on exclusionary zoning; excludes flood-prone land from affordable housing vacant land analysis; provides housing obligation cap.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/25/2021)**

1 AN ACT concerning affordable housing, vacant land analysis, and  
2 municipal challenges to non-redevelopment housing projects  
3 ordered by COAH, amending P.L.1985, c.222 and P.L.1995,  
4 c.231, and supplementing chapter 16A of Title 58 of the Revised  
5 Statutes.

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

9  
10 1. Section 4 of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-304) is amended to  
11 read as follows:

12 4. As used in **[this act]** P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-301 et al.):

13 a. "Council" means the Council on Affordable Housing  
14 established in **[this act]** P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-301 et al.),  
15 which shall have primary jurisdiction for the administration of  
16 housing obligations in accordance with sound regional planning  
17 considerations in this State, and any successor body, temporary or  
18 otherwise, that obtains such primary jurisdiction.

19 b. "Housing region" means a geographic area of not less than  
20 two nor more than four contiguous, whole counties which exhibit  
21 significant social, economic and income similarities, and which  
22 constitute to the greatest extent practicable the primary metropolitan  
23 statistical areas as last defined by the United States Census Bureau  
24 prior to the effective date of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-301 et al.).

25 c. "Low income housing" means housing affordable according  
26 to federal Department of Housing and Urban Development or other  
27 recognized standards for home ownership and rental costs and  
28 occupied or reserved for occupancy by households with a gross  
29 household income equal to 50% or less of the median gross  
30 household income for households of the same size within the  
31 housing region in which the housing is located.

32 d. "Moderate income housing" means housing affordable  
33 according to federal Department of Housing and Urban  
34 Development or other recognized standards for home ownership  
35 and rental costs and occupied or reserved for occupancy by  
36 households with a gross household income equal to more than 50%  
37 but less than 80% of the median gross household income for  
38 households of the same size within the housing region in which the  
39 housing is located.

40 e. "Resolution of participation" means a resolution adopted by  
41 a municipality in which the municipality chooses to prepare a fair  
42 share plan and housing element in accordance with **[this act]**  
43 P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-301 et al.).

44 f. "Inclusionary development" means a residential housing  
45 development in which a substantial percentage of the housing units

**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.

1 are provided for a reasonable income range of low and moderate  
2 income households.

3 g. "Conversion" means the conversion of existing commercial,  
4 industrial, or residential structures for low and moderate income  
5 housing purposes where a substantial percentage of the housing  
6 units are provided for a reasonable income range of low and  
7 moderate income households.

8 h. "Development" means any development for which  
9 permission may be required pursuant to the "Municipal Land Use  
10 Law," P.L.1975, c.291 (C.40:55D-1 et seq.).

11 i. "Agency" means the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage  
12 Finance Agency established by P.L.1983, c.530 (C.55:14K-1 et  
13 seq.).

14 j. "Prospective need" means a projection of housing needs  
15 based on development and growth which is reasonably likely to  
16 occur in a region or a municipality, as the case may be, as a result  
17 of actual determination of public and private entities. In  
18 determining prospective need, consideration shall be given to  
19 approvals of development applications, real property transfers and  
20 economic projections prepared by the State Planning Commission  
21 established by sections 1 through 12 of P.L.1985, c.398 (C.52:18A-  
22 196 et seq.).

23 k. "Disabled person" means a person with a physical disability,  
24 infirmity, malformation or disfigurement which is caused by bodily  
25 injury, birth defect, aging or illness including epilepsy and other  
26 seizure disorders, and which shall include, but not be limited to, any  
27 degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination,  
28 blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment,  
29 muteness or speech impediment or physical reliance on a service or  
30 guide dog, wheelchair, or other remedial appliance or device.

31 l. "Adaptable" means constructed in compliance with the  
32 technical design standards of the barrier free subcode adopted by  
33 the Commissioner of Community Affairs pursuant to the "State  
34 Uniform Construction Code Act," P.L.1975, c.217 (C.52:27D-119  
35 et seq.) and in accordance with the provisions of section 5 of  
36 P.L.2005, c.350 (C.52:27D-123.15).

37 m. "Very low income housing" means housing affordable  
38 according to federal Department of Housing and Urban  
39 Development or other recognized standards for home ownership  
40 and rental costs and occupied or reserved for occupancy by  
41 households with a gross household income equal to 30% or less of  
42 the median gross household income for households of the same size  
43 within the housing region in which the housing is located.

44 (cf: P.L.2008, c.46, s.5)

45

46 2. Section 7 of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-307) is amended to  
47 read as follows:

1       7. It shall be the duty of the council, seven months after the  
2 confirmation of the last member initially appointed to the council,  
3 or January 1, 1986, whichever is earlier, and from time to time  
4 thereafter, to:

5       a. Determine housing regions of the State;

6       b. Estimate the present and prospective need for low and  
7 moderate income housing at the State and regional levels;

8       c. Adopt criteria and guidelines for:

9       (1) Municipal determination of its present and prospective fair  
10 share of the housing need in a given region which shall be  
11 computed for a 10-year period.

12       Municipal fair share shall be determined after crediting on a one-  
13 to-one basis each current unit of low and moderate income housing  
14 of adequate standard, including any such housing constructed or  
15 acquired as part of a housing program specifically intended to  
16 provide housing for low and moderate income households.  
17 Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, a municipality shall  
18 be entitled to a credit for a unit if it demonstrates that (a) the  
19 municipality issued a certificate of occupancy for the unit, which  
20 was either newly constructed or rehabilitated between April 1, 1980  
21 and December 15, 1986; (b) a construction code official certifies,  
22 based upon a visual exterior survey, that the unit is in compliance  
23 with pertinent construction code standards with respect to structural  
24 elements, roofing, siding, doors and windows; (c) the household  
25 occupying the unit certifies in writing, under penalty of perjury, that  
26 it receives no greater income than that established pursuant to  
27 section 4 of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-304) to qualify for  
28 moderate income housing; and (d) the unit for which credit is  
29 sought is affordable to low and moderate income households under  
30 the standards established by the council at the time of filing of the  
31 petition for substantive certification. It shall be sufficient if the  
32 certification required in subparagraph (c) is signed by one member  
33 of the household. A certification submitted pursuant to this  
34 paragraph shall be reviewable only by the council or its staff and  
35 shall not be a public record;

36       Nothing in P.L.1995, c.81 shall affect the validity of substantive  
37 certification granted by the council prior to November 21, 1994, or  
38 of a judgment of compliance entered by any court of competent  
39 jurisdiction prior to that date. Additionally, any municipality that  
40 received substantive certification or a judgment of compliance prior  
41 to November 21, 1994 and filed a motion prior to November 21,  
42 1994 to amend substantive certification or a judgment of  
43 compliance for the purpose of obtaining credits, shall be entitled to  
44 a determination of its right to credits pursuant to the standards  
45 established by the Legislature prior to P.L.1995, c.81. Any  
46 municipality that filed a motion prior to November 21, 1994 for the  
47 purpose of obtaining credits, which motion was supported by the  
48 results of a completed survey performed pursuant to council rules,

1 shall be entitled to a determination of its right to credits pursuant to  
2 the standards established by the Legislature prior to P.L.1995, c.81;

3 (2) Municipal adjustment of the present and prospective fair  
4 share based upon population, available vacant and developable land,  
5 infrastructure considerations or environmental or historic  
6 preservation factors and adjustments shall be made whenever:

7 (a) The preservation of historically or important architecture and  
8 sites and their environs or environmentally sensitive lands may be  
9 jeopardized,

10 (b) The established pattern of development in the community  
11 would be drastically altered,

12 (c) Adequate land for recreational, conservation or agricultural  
13 and farmland preservation purposes would not be provided,

14 (d) Adequate open space would not be provided,

15 (e) The pattern of development is contrary to the planning  
16 designations in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan  
17 prepared pursuant to sections 1 through 12 of P.L.1985, c.398  
18 (C.52:18A-196 et seq.),

19 (f) Vacant and developable land is not available in the  
20 municipality, and

21 (g) Adequate public facilities and infrastructure capacities are  
22 not available, or would result in costs prohibitive to the public if  
23 provided.

24 (3) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1993, c.31).

25 d. Provide population and household projections for the State  
26 and housing regions;

27 e. In its discretion, place a limit, based on a percentage of  
28 existing housing stock in a municipality and any other criteria  
29 including employment opportunities which the council deems  
30 appropriate, upon the aggregate number of units which may be  
31 allocated to a municipality as its fair share of the region's present  
32 and prospective need for low and moderate income housing. An  
33 allocation of units to a municipality as its fair share shall not exceed  
34 an amount that would result in an increase of the municipal  
35 population by more than five percent in any 10-year period. For the  
36 purposes of this limit, each unit of affordable housing shall be  
37 deemed to be occupied by four residents, except that units of  
38 housing for seniors shall be deemed to be occupied by two  
39 residents. No municipality shall be required to address a fair share  
40 of housing units affordable to households with a gross household  
41 income of less than **【80%】** 80 percent of the median gross  
42 household income beyond the lesser of: (1) the number of units that  
43 represent housing for five percent of a municipality's population; or  
44 (2) 1,000 units within 【ten】 10 years from the grant of substantive  
45 certification, unless it is demonstrated, following objection by an  
46 interested party and an evidentiary hearing, based upon the facts  
47 and circumstances of the affected municipality that it is likely that  
48 the municipality through its zoning powers could create a realistic

1 opportunity for more than: (1) the number of low and moderate  
2 income units that would represent housing for a five percent  
3 increase of the municipal population; or (2) 1,000 low and moderate  
4 income units in a municipality where 1,000 units would represent  
5 housing for less than five percent of the municipal population,  
6 within that ~~ten-year~~ 10-year period. For the purposes of this  
7 section, the facts and circumstances which shall determine whether  
8 a municipality's fair share shall exceed 1,000 units, as provided  
9 above, shall be a finding that the municipality has issued more than  
10 5,000 certificates of occupancy for residential units in the ~~ten-~~  
11 ~~year~~ 10-year period preceding the petition for substantive  
12 certification in connection with which the objection was filed.

13 For the purpose of crediting low and moderate income housing  
14 units in order to arrive at a determination of present and prospective  
15 fair share, as set forth in paragraph (1) of subsection c. of this  
16 section, housing units comprised in a community residence for the  
17 developmentally disabled, as defined in section 2 of P.L.1977,  
18 c.448 (C.30:11B-2), shall be fully credited pursuant to rules  
19 promulgated or to be promulgated by the council, to the extent that  
20 the units are affordable to persons of low and moderate income and  
21 are available to the general public.

22 The council, with respect to any municipality seeking substantive  
23 certification, shall require that a minimum percentage of housing  
24 units in any residential development resulting from a zoning change  
25 made to a previously non-residentially-zoned property, where the  
26 change in zoning precedes or follows the application for residential  
27 development by no more than 24 months, be reserved for occupancy  
28 by low or moderate income households, which percentage shall be  
29 determined by the council based on economic feasibility with  
30 consideration for the proposed density of development.

31 In carrying out the above duties, including, but not limited to,  
32 present and prospective need estimations the council shall give  
33 appropriate weight to pertinent research studies, government  
34 reports, decisions of other branches of government, implementation  
35 of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan prepared  
36 pursuant to sections 1 through 12 of P.L.1985, c.398 (C.52:18A-196  
37 et seq.) and public comment. To assist the council, the State  
38 Planning Commission established under that act shall provide the  
39 council annually with economic growth, development and decline  
40 projections for each housing region for the next ~~ten~~ 10 years.  
41 The council shall develop procedures for periodically adjusting  
42 regional need based upon the low and moderate income housing  
43 that is provided in the region through any federal, State, municipal  
44 or private housing program.

45 No housing unit subject to the provisions of section 5 of  
46 P.L.2005, c.350 (C.52:27D-123.15) and to the provisions of the  
47 barrier free subcode adopted by the Commissioner of Community

1 Affairs pursuant to the "State Uniform Construction Code Act,"  
2 P.L.1975, c.217 (C.52:27D-119 et seq.) shall be eligible for  
3 inclusion in the municipal fair share plan certified by the council  
4 unless the unit complies with the requirements set forth thereunder.

5 The council shall not order a non-redevelopment housing project  
6 on undeveloped land unless the council makes a determination that  
7 such a project would counteract exclusionary zoning practices  
8 occurring in the municipality at the time the order is made.  
9 (cf: P.L.2008, c.46, s.6)

10

11 3. Section 1 of P.L.1995, c.231 (C.52:27D-310.1 et seq.) is  
12 amended to read as follows:

13 1. When computing a municipal adjustment regarding available  
14 land resources as part of the determination of a municipality's fair  
15 share of affordable housing, the Council on Affordable Housing  
16 shall exclude from designating as vacant land:

17 (a) any land that is owned by a local government entity that as  
18 of January 1, 1997, has adopted, prior to the institution of a lawsuit  
19 seeking a builder's remedy or prior to the filing of a petition for  
20 substantive certification of a housing element and fair share plan, a  
21 resolution authorizing an execution of agreement that the land be  
22 utilized for a public purpose other than housing;

23 (b) any land listed on a master plan of a municipality as being  
24 dedicated, by easement or otherwise, for purposes of conservation,  
25 park lands or open space and which is owned, leased, licensed, or in  
26 any manner operated by a county, municipality or tax-exempt,  
27 nonprofit organization including a local board of education, or by  
28 more than one municipality by joint agreement pursuant to  
29 P.L.1964, c.185 (C.40:61-35.1 et seq.), for so long as the entity  
30 maintains such ownership, lease, license, or operational control of  
31 such land;

32 (c) any vacant contiguous parcels of land in private ownership  
33 of a size which would accommodate fewer than five housing units if  
34 current standards of the council were applied pertaining to housing  
35 density;

36 (d) historic and architecturally important sites listed on the State  
37 Register of Historic Places or National Register of Historic Places  
38 prior to the submission of the petition of substantive certification;

39 (e) agricultural lands when the development rights to these  
40 lands have been purchased or restricted by covenant;

41 (f) sites designated for active recreation that are designated for  
42 recreational purposes in the municipal master plan; **[and]**

43 (g) environmentally sensitive lands where development is  
44 prohibited by any State or federal agency; and

45 (h) any land that is (1) lower than the most recent flood  
46 elevation determination, measured pursuant to federal standards, (2)  
47 lower than the applicable flood elevation standard required under  
48 regulations adopted pursuant to the "Flood Hazard Area Control

1 Act," P.L.1962, c.19 (C.58:16A-50 et seq.), or (3) within 100 feet of  
2 category one waters designated by the Department of  
3 Environmental Protection, pursuant to the "Water Pollution Control  
4 Act," P.L.1977, c.74 (C.58:10A-1 et seq.), or any other law, or any  
5 rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto.

6 No municipality shall be required to utilize for affordable  
7 housing purposes land that is excluded from being designated as  
8 vacant land.  
9 (cf: P.L.2008, c.46, s.39)

10

11 4. Section 15 of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-315) is amended to  
12 read as follows:

13 15. a. The council shall engage in a mediation and review  
14 process in the following situations: (1) if an objection to the  
15 municipality's petition for substantive certification is filed with the  
16 council within the time specified in section 14 of this act; **【or】** (2) if  
17 a request for mediation and review is made pursuant to section 16  
18 of this act ; or if the municipality challenges an order issued by the  
19 council to construct a non-redevelopment housing project on  
20 undeveloped land not later than the 30th day after the order was  
21 issued.

22 b. (1) In cases in which an objection is filed to substantive  
23 certification the council shall meet with the municipality and the  
24 objectors and attempt to mediate a resolution of the dispute. If the  
25 mediation is successful, the council shall issue a substantive  
26 certification if it finds that the criteria of section 14 of this act have  
27 been met.

28 (2) In cases where a municipality challenges a non-  
29 redevelopment housing project on undeveloped land ordered by the  
30 council, the order of the council shall be overturned unless it is  
31 determined that the council's order is based on exclusionary zoning  
32 practices occurring in the municipality at the time the order is made.

33 c. If the mediation efforts are unsuccessful, the matter shall be  
34 transferred to the Office of Administrative Law as a contested case  
35 as defined in the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L. 1968, c. 410  
36 (C. 52:14B-1 et seq.).

37 The Office of Administrative Law shall expedite its hearing  
38 process as much as practicable by promptly assigning an  
39 administrative law judge to the matter; promptly scheduling an  
40 evidentiary hearing; expeditiously conducting and concluding the  
41 evidentiary hearing; limiting the time allotted for briefs, proposed  
42 findings of fact, conclusions of law, forms of order or other  
43 disposition, or other supplemental material; and the prompt  
44 preparation of the initial decision. A written transcript of all oral  
45 testimony and copies of all exhibits introduced into evidence shall  
46 be submitted to the council by the Office of Administrative Law  
47 simultaneously with a copy of the initial decision. The evidentiary  
48 hearings shall be concluded and the initial decision issued no later



1 than 90 days after the transmittal of the matter as a contested case to  
2 the Office of Administrative Law by the council, unless the time is  
3 extended by the Director of the Office of Administrative Law for  
4 good cause shown.

5 (cf: P.L.1985, c.222, s.15)

6

7 5. (New section) The Department of Environmental Protection  
8 shall, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968,  
9 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), adopt rules and regulations, by the first  
10 day of the seventh month next following enactment, to guide  
11 determinations of flood-prone lands excluded from available land  
12 resources for affordable housing purposes pursuant to section 3 of  
13 P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this  
14 bill).

15

16 6. This act shall take effect immediately, but section 3 shall  
17 remain inoperative until the first day of the seventh month next  
18 following enactment.

19

20

21

STATEMENT

22

23 This bill allows a municipality to challenge an order by the  
24 Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to construct, or allow to be  
25 constructed, a non-redevelopment housing project on undeveloped  
26 land. The municipal challenge would be successful, unless the  
27 order by COAH is based on exclusionary zoning practices occurring  
28 in the municipality at the time the order is made.

29

30 Additionally, this bill caps the number of units a municipality  
31 may have allocated as its fair share affordable housing obligation  
32 with regard to the size of the municipal population. Current law  
33 provides that no municipality shall be required to address a fair  
34 share of affordable housing units beyond 1,000 low and moderate  
35 income units within 10 years from the grant of substantive  
36 certification; except that a municipality may be allocated more than  
37 1,000 units if, based upon an evidentiary hearing, it is found likely  
38 that the municipality, through its zoning powers, could create a  
39 realistic opportunity for more than 1,000 low and moderate income  
40 units within that 10-year period. For some municipalities in the  
41 State, this many additional units may increase the overall municipal  
42 population dramatically. In order to prevent the disparate impact  
43 this can create for municipalities with small populations, this bill  
44 provides that an allocation of units to a municipality as its fair share  
45 shall not exceed an amount that would result in an increase of the  
46 municipal population by more than five percent.

46

47 Finally, this bill requires the exclusion of flood-prone land when  
computing a municipal adjustment of available land resources as

1 part of the determination of a municipality's fair share affordable  
2 housing obligation. Currently, land may not be considered in  
3 determining a municipality's available land resources for affordable  
4 housing purposes if it contains any one of various special features,  
5 consisting of: (a) land owned by a government entity, and intended  
6 for a public purpose, (b) certain park land, open space and other  
7 land dedicated for conservation, (c) certain very small land parcels  
8 held in private ownership, (d) historic and architecturally important  
9 sites, (e) agricultural land with restricted development rights, (f)  
10 sites designated for active recreation, and (g) environmentally  
11 sensitive land where development is prohibited by law.

12 This bill would also exclude from determinations of available  
13 land resources for affordable housing purposes any land that is (1)  
14 lower than the most recent "flood elevation determination,"  
15 measured under federal standards, (2) lower than the applicable  
16 flood elevation standard required under regulations adopted  
17 pursuant to the "Flood Hazard Area Control Act," P.L.1962, c.19  
18 (C.58:16A-50 et seq.), or (3) within 100 feet of category one  
19 waters, as designated by the Department of Environmental  
20 Protection. As defined under 44 C.F.R.59.1, a "flood elevation  
21 determination" refers to a determination by the Federal Insurance  
22 Administrator of the water surface elevations of a "base flood," also  
23 understood as a flood level that has a one percent or greater chance  
24 of occurrence in any given year.

25 This bill directs the Department of Environmental Protection to  
26 adopt rules and regulations to guide determinations of flood-prone  
27 lands by the first day of the seventh month next following  
28 enactment. This bill remains inoperative until the first day of the  
29 seventh month next following enactment.