## [First Reprint] ASSEMBLY, No. 5130

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 10, 2020

Sponsored by: Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY District 27 (Essex and Morris) Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer) Assemblyman BENJIE E. WIMBERLY District 35 (Bergen and Passaic) Senator TROY SINGLETON District 7 (Burlington) Senator NELLIE POU District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

**Co-Sponsored by:** 

Assemblywomen Quijano, Tucker, Timberlake, Assemblyman Mazzeo, Assemblywoman McKnight, Assemblyman McKeon and Senator Turner

#### **SYNOPSIS**

Establishes "New Jersey Foreclosure Prevention Act."

#### **CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on January 7, 2021,

with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/19/2021)

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AN ACT concerning the mitigation of loss on distressed and 1 2 foreclosed properties, supplementing and amending Title 55 of 3 the Revised Statutes, and amending Title 2A of the New Jersey 4 Statutes. 5 6 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State 7 of New Jersey: 8 9 1. (New section) This act shall be known and may be cited as 10 the "New Jersey Foreclosure Prevention Act." 11 12 2. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that: a. New Jersey experienced heightened foreclosure rates during 13 the Great Recession beginning in 2008 and continuing for the 14 15 ensuing decade, only returning to pre-recession rates of foreclosure in 2019. 16 17 b. New Jersey is currently suffering through the COVID-19 18 pandemic, with more than 1.6 million New Jersey residents seeking unemployment benefits due to job loss, furlough, or hour 19 20 reductions. 21 c. Homeowners in New Jersey have suffered enormous negative 22 economic impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in 23 increased housing insecurity. During each month from April 2020 24 through August 2020, the number of New Jersey households that 25 deferred or did not pay their mortgages exceeded 160,000; 26 d. Given New Jersey's susceptibility to prolonged periods of 27 elevated rates of foreclosure, as evidenced by the long-term impact 28 of the Great Recession, the Legislature hereby determines and 29 declares that there is a need to provide alternative foreclosure mitigation measures. 30 31 32 3. (New section) As used in P.L. (C. ) (pending , c. before the Legislature as this bill): 33 34 "Agency" means the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency established pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1983, c.530 35 36 (C.55:14K-4). "Community development corporation" means a nonprofit 37 38 community development corporation established pursuant to Title 39 15 or 15A of the Revised Statutes of New Jersey, or other law of 40 this State, with a focus on producing and operating affordable 41 housing or housing with on-site social services for individuals with 42 special needs. 43 "Community development financial institution" means an entity 44 designated and certified by the United States Department of the

Matter underlined <u>thus</u> is new matter

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted January 7, 2021.

Treasury as a Community Development Financial Institution
 pursuant to 12 CFR Part 1805.

3 "Contractor" means a qualified community development
4 financial institution that enters into a contract or loan with the
5 agency pursuant to section 5 of P.L.1983, c.530 (C.55:14K-5).

6 "Eligible property" means any residential property or mortgage 7 note that is owned by an institutional lender as the result of a 8 mortgage foreclosure judgment or a deed in lieu of foreclosure, is 9 by a municipality as the result of a tax foreclosure judgment or is 10 subject to a nonperforming loan from an institutional lender.

"Fund" means the Foreclosure Intervention Fund, established
pursuant to section 4 of P.L., c. (C.) (pending before the
Legislature as this bill).

14 "Institutional lender" or "lender" means any lawfully constituted 15 mortgage lender, mortgage investor, or mortgage loan servicer that 16 owns an eligible property, including, but not limited to, any agency 17 or instrumentality of the United States or the State, including, but 18 not limited to, the Government National Mortgage Association, the 19 Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, the Federal National 20 Mortgage Association, the Federal Housing Administration, the 21 Small Business Administration, the Resolution Funding 22 Corporation, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

23 "Intercreditor agreement" means an agreement among creditors
24 that sets forth the various lien positions and the rights and liabilities
25 of each creditor and its impacts on the other creditors.

26 "Program" means the "New Jersey Residential Foreclosure
27 Prevention Program" established pursuant to section 4 of P.L. ,
28 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

"Qualified community development financial institution" means
a community development financial institution that has a minimum
of \$50,000,000 in assets and a minimum of two years' experience in
the financing and acquisition of real estate for affordable housing.

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34 4. (New section) a. There is established in the agency the "New 35 Jersey Residential Foreclosure Prevention Program," which shall be subject to the powers of the agency, as designated pursuant to 36 37 section 5 of P.L.1983, c.530 (C.55:14K-5). The goal of the program is to ensure that loss mitigation and foreclosure prevention 38 39 measures are taken on eligible properties. Either directly, or 40 through its contractors, the agency may purchase eligible properties 41 and mortgage assets in furtherance of this goal, pursuant to section 42 5 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this 43 bill).

b. The agency in furtherance of the program may enter into contracts with any person, corporation, or entity which the agency determines to be necessary or appropriate to carry out its responsibilities under P.L., c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). Such contracts shall be subject to the

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procedures adopted pursuant to section 5 of P.L. , c. (C. )
 (pending before the Legislature as this bill). All contracts entered
 into in furtherance of the program shall be governed by the laws of
 the State and shall provide for indemnification of the agency.

5 c. In carrying out the agency's duties under P.L.

6 ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the (C. C. 7 agency may employ the consulting services of real estate and loan 8 portfolio asset management firms, property management firms, 9 auction marketing firms, brokerage services firms, appraisers, and 10 such other consultants and employees required in the judgment of 11 the agency, notwithstanding the provisions of Title 11A of the New 12 Jersey Statutes.

Within 180 days following the enactment of P.L. 13 d. 14 ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the (C. c. 15 agency shall adopt a funding plan for the program utilizing the 16 "Foreclosure Intervention Fund" established pursuant to section 6 17 of P.L., c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). 18 The agency may directly fund the program through revenue 19 generated by the fund. The agency shall have the authority to alter 20 its funding plan as the Executive Director of the agency deems 21 necessary. The funding plan shall include, but not be limited to, 22 program revenue, expected expenditures and projections for the 23 acquisition of foreclosed residential properties or mortgage assets.

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25 5. (New section) a. (1) The agency may enter into contracts 26 or loans, or both, with no more than two qualified community 27 development financial institutions to negotiate, bid for, and 28 purchase eligible properties and mortgage assets for the purpose 29 In selecting contractors from among facilitating the program. 30 qualified community development financial institutions, the agency 31 shall accord a strong preference to qualified community 32 development financial institutions that have substantial experience 33 in lending in the State and substantial knowledge of the State's real 34 estate markets. The agency may enter into contracts or loans, or 35 both, with a partnership or consortia of organizations, as long as a 36 qualified community development financial institution is the lead 37 entity, or a partnership or consortia of multiple qualified community 38 development financial institutions.

39 (2) Should the agency contract with a community development 40 financial institution for the purposes of P.L. , c. (C. ) 41 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the contract shall 42 specify the amounts, schedules, and types of funding to be provided 43 by the agency to the qualified community development financial 44 institution, the repayment schedule for the portion of that funding to 45 be repaid, and targeted goals for homeowner interventions. The 46 agency may condition funding and goals upon the availability of 47 funds to the program. The contract shall specify reasonable 48 administrative costs sufficient to enable the qualified community

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development financial institution to exercise its obligations
pursuant to P.L., c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as
this bill). The contract shall set forth criteria for instances when the
purchase, sale, lease, and conveyance of properties furthers the
purposes of P.L., c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as
this bill).

b. All purchases, sales, leases, and conveyances of property by
qualified community development financial institutions exercised
pursuant to this section shall be deemed to lessen the burdens of
government in furthering the purposes of P.L., c. (C.)
(pending before the Legislature as this bill).

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13 6. (New section) a. There is established within the agency a 14 Foreclosure Intervention Fund, which shall be a non-lapsing, 15 revolving fund and which shall be the repository for funds 16 appropriated or otherwise made available for the purposes of 17 P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), and any interest earned thereon. The fund shall be administered by 18 19 the agency, in accordance with its authority under section 5 of 20 P.L.1983, c.530 (C.55:14K-5) to manage funds for housing 21 programs.

b. The agency may transfer into the fund any amounts held or
received by the agency that are needed by the agency or its
contractors for the purchase of eligible property.

c. The agency may use annually up to five percent of the monies
available in the fund for the payment of any necessary
administrative costs related to the administration of the program.

d. Revenue generated through the mechanisms established
pursuant to N.J.S.2A:17-38 exceeding the funding plan developed
pursuant to subsection d. of section 4 of P.L. , c. (C. )
(pending before the Legislature as this bill) may be appropriated by
the agency for additional foreclosure prevention programs.

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34 7. (New Section) a. The agency may make grants to eligible 35 applicants, including, but not limited to, non-profit housing sponsors, municipalities or other governmental entities utilizing 36 37 funds provided by P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the 38 Legislature as this bill) or otherwise made available to the agency. 39 Grants issued pursuant to this section shall be used to advance the 40 goals of the program, as established pursuant to section 4 of P.L., 41 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

b. The agency shall establish regulations, procedures or
guidelines governing the qualifications of applicants, the
application procedures and the criteria for awarding grants to such
eligible applicants and the standards for establishing the amount,
terms and conditions of each grant.

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1 8. (New section) a. The agency is authorized to defend and 2 indemnify the federal government, any department, board, body, 3 agency or other entity thereof, the Government National Mortgage 4 Association and its successors and assigns, the Federal National 5 Mortgage Association and its successors and assigns, and the 6 Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation and its successors and 7 assigns, against claims, causes of action, demands, costs or 8 judgments against that entity arising as a direct result of that 9 entity's agreement with the agency, upon the terms and limitations 10 the agency deems reasonable and appropriate. An agreement to 11 defend and indemnify pursuant to this subsection shall not bar, 12 reduce, limit or affect any remedies the agency may have to enforce the agency's agreement or to assert a claim for damages to which 13 14 the agency may be entitled arising out of the entity's failure to 15 perform the agreement, or for the recovery of funds expended for 16 the defense of an entity if the defense was undertaken in response to 17 a claim or cause of action brought against the entity which arose 18 from gross negligence, willful misconduct, fraud, intentional tort, 19 bad faith, or criminal conduct of the entity or one or more of its 20 officials or employees. No one other than an entity which is a party 21 to the agreement with the agency may enforce any agreement for 22 defense or indemnification between that entity and the agency.

23 b. The agency may create a reserve fund, procure insurance or 24 take other such appropriate action in order to meet its future 25 obligations, if any, created by such indemnification obligations. 26 Any agreement to indemnify pursuant to subsection a. may be made 27 only as necessary or appropriate to the exercise of any power herein 28 granted or reasonably implied, provided that: (1) such 29 indemnification shall be payable solely from the funds of the 30 agency on deposit in its General Fund or placed in a reserve fund 31 for that purpose; and (2) such indemnification shall not constitute a 32 debt, obligation or liability of the State, and the State shall not be 33 liable for any obligation as a result of the agency's indemnification 34 obligation.

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36 9. N.J.S.2A:17-38 is amended to read as follows:

37 2A:17-38. a. When a sheriff or other officer makes a sale by 38 virtue of an execution or executions to [him] the sheriff or officer 39 directed, [he] the sheriff or officer shall, within 30 days thereafter, 40 make and file, with his bill of costs or execution fees, in the office of the clerk of the court out of which the execution or executions 41 42 issued, a true statement and calculation, in order of time, of the 43 execution or executions by virtue of which the sale was made, the 44 amount or amounts due thereon, respectively, at the time of the 45 sale, the time or times of sale and the amount of the sales.

46 <u>b. (1) When calculating the amount due thereon, as described in</u>
 47 subsection a. of this section, the sheriff or officer shall additionally
 48 <sup>1</sup>[consider] collect<sup>1</sup> \$350 per sale to be utilized by the fund within

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1 the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency established 2 in section 6 of P.L., c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature 3 as this bill). (2) The revenues obtained from these increased amounts, after 4 5 deduction of any actual administrative costs incurred by the sheriff 6 or officer in carrying out the provisions of this subsection, shall be 7 transmitted no later than the first day of each quarter by the sheriff 8 or officer to the fund with an accounting of collections and 9 foreclosure actions during the corresponding quarter. 10 c. The statement shall be certified under the hand of the officer 11 making and filing it, and shall be conclusive against the officer 12 only. If there be more sales than [1] one, the statement shall be 13 made and filed within 30 days after the final sale. 14 (cf: N.J.S.2A:17-38) 15 16 10. Section 7 of P.L.1983, c.530 (C.55:14K-7) is amended to 17 read as follows: 18 7. a. Loans made by the agency to finance housing projects 19 shall be subject to the following terms and conditions: 20 (1) The loan shall be for a period of time not in excess of 50 21 years as determined by the agency; 22 (2) The amount of the loan shall not exceed 90% of the total 23 project cost as determined by the agency, except that as to projects 24 to be owned, constructed, improved, rehabilitated, operated, 25 managed and maintained as mutual housing or by any corporation 26 or association organized not for profit which has as one of its 27 purposes the construction, improvement or rehabilitation of housing 28 projects, the amount of the loan shall not exceed 100% of the total 29 project cost as determined by the agency; but the agency may 30 make additional loans to a housing sponsor to which a loan by the 31 agency for the cost of a project is outstanding if and to the extent 32 that the agency finds that such additional loan is required to more 33 adequately secure and protect the project or to avoid a default by 34 the sponsor on the original loan for the cost of the project and is in 35 the best interest of the agency and the holders of its bonds issued to 36 finance the original loan for the cost of the project; 37 (3) The interest rate on the loan shall be established by the 38 agency at the lowest level consistent with the agency's cost of 39 operation and its responsibilities to the holders of its bonds; 40 (4) The loan shall be evidenced by a mortgage note or bond and 41 by a mortgage which shall be a first lien on the project and which 42 shall contain such terms and provisions and be in a form approved 43 by the agency. The agency shall require the qualified housing 44 sponsor receiving a loan or its contractor to post security in 45 amounts related to the project cost as established by regulation and 46 to execute such other assurances and guarantees as the agency may 47 deem necessary and may require its principals or stockholders to

also execute such other assurances and guarantees as the agency
 may deem necessary;

3 The loan shall be subject to an agreement between the (5) 4 agency and the housing sponsor which will subject the housing 5 sponsor and its principals or stockholders to limitations established 6 by the agency as to rentals and other charges, builders' and 7 developers' profits and fees, and the disposition of its property and 8 franchises to the extent more restrictive limitations are not 9 provided by the law under which the borrower is incorporated or 10 organized;

11 (6) The loan shall be subject to an agreement between the 12 agency and the housing sponsor limiting the housing sponsor and its 13 principals or stockholders to such rate of return on its investment in 14 the housing project to be assisted with a loan from the agency as 15 shall be fixed from time to time by the agency in its regulations 16 which shall take into account the prevailing rates of return available 17 for similar investments and the risks associated with the 18 development of the project, together with factors designed to 19 promote the objectives of providing affordable housing, 20 encouraging investment in urban development areas, maintaining 21 and improving the existing housing stock, and other objectives of 22 this act; but agreements entered into by the predecessors of the 23 agency prior to the effective date of this act shall continue to be 24 subject to any restrictions on rate of return imposed by prior law 25 restrictions are expressly modified pursuant to unless those 26 regulations of the agency. No housing sponsor which is permitted 27 by the provisions of the law under which it is organized or 28 incorporated to earn a return on its investment, nor any of the 29 principals or stockholders of that housing sponsor, shall earn, 30 accept or receive a return on investment greater than the rate of 31 return fixed by the agency in any housing project assisted with a 32 loan from the agency, whether upon the completion of the 33 construction, improvement or rehabilitation of the project, or upon 34 the operation thereof, or upon the sale, assignment or lease of the 35 project to any other person, association or corporation. Any person, 36 association or corporation who violates the provisions of this 37 subsection is guilty of a crime of the fourth degree;

38 (7) No loan shall be executed except a loan made to a 39 corporation or association organized not for profit which has as one 40 of its purposes the development, construction, improvement or 41 rehabilitation of housing projects or for mutual housing unless the 42 housing sponsor agrees (a) to certify upon completion of project 43 construction, improvement or rehabilitation, subject to audit by the 44 agency, either that the actual project cost as defined herein 45 exceeded the amount of the loan proceeds by 10% or more, or the 46 amount by which the loan proceeds exceed 90% of the total project 47 cost, and (b) to pay forthwith to the agency, for application to 48 reduction of the principal of the loan, the amount, if any, of such

1 excess loan proceeds, subject to audit and determination by the 2 agency. No loan shall be made to a corporation or association 3 organized not for profit or for mutual housing unless the 4 corporation or association organized not for profit or for mutual 5 housing agrees to certify the actual project cost upon completion of 6 the project, subject to audit and determination by the agency, and 7 further agrees to pay forthwith to the agency, for application to 8 reduction of the principal of the loan, the amount, if any, by which 9 the proceeds of the loan exceed the certified project cost subject to 10 audit and determination by the agency. Notwithstanding the 11 provisions of this paragraph, the agency may accept, in lieu of any 12 certification of project cost as provided herein, such other 13 assurances of the project cost in any form or manner whatsoever, as 14 will enable the agency to determine with reasonable accuracy the 15 amount of the project cost;

16 (8) No loan shall be made for the construction, improvement or 17 rehabilitation of a housing project for which tax exemption is 18 granted by a municipality unless the tax exemption remains in 19 effect during the entire term of the loan, unless a lesser period of 20 tax exemption is approved by the agency; and

21 The loan shall be subject to an agreement between the (9) 22 agency and the qualified housing sponsor which contains a 23 provision stating the prevailing wage rate, as determined by either 24 the Commissioner of Labor and Industry or the Secretary of the 25 United States Department of Labor in accordance with the 26 provisions of section 42 of this act, which can be paid to the 27 workmen employed in the performance of any contract for the 28 construction or rehabilitation of any housing project, and which 29 stipulates that the qualified housing sponsor, or any builder, 30 contractor or subcontractor thereof, shall pay to such workmen not 31 less than the applicable prevailing wage rate pursuant to that 32 section.

b. As a condition of any loan to finance a housing project, the
agency shall have the power at all times during the construction,
improvement or rehabilitation of a housing project and the
operation thereof:

37 (1) To enter upon and inspect without prior notice any project, including all parts thereof, for the purpose of investigating the 38 39 physical and financial condition thereof, and its construction, 40 rehabilitation, operation, improvement, management and 41 maintenance, and to examine all books and records with respect to 42 capitalization, income and other matters relating thereto and to 43 make such charges as may be required to cover the cost of such 44 inspections and examinations;

45 (2) To order such alterations, changes or repairs as may be
46 necessary to protect the security of its investment in a housing
47 project or the health, safety, and welfare of the occupants thereof;

1 (3) To order any managing agent, project manager or owner of a 2 housing project to do such acts as may be necessary to comply with 3 the provisions of all applicable laws or ordinances or any rule or 4 regulation of the agency or the terms of any agreement concerning 5 the project or to refrain from doing any acts in violation thereof and 6 in this regard the agency shall be a proper party to file a complaint 7 and to prosecute thereon for any violations of law or ordinances as 8 set forth herein;

9 (4) To require the adoption and continuous use of uniform 10 systems of accounts and records for a project and to require all 11 owners or managers of a project to file annual reports containing 12 that information and verified in such manner as the agency shall 13 require, and to file at the times and on the forms as it may 14 prescribe, reports and answers to specific inquiries required by the 15 agency to determine the extent of compliance with any agreement, 16 the terms of the loan, the provisions of this act and any other 17 applicable law;

18 (5) To enforce, by court action if necessary, the terms and 19 provisions of any agreement between the agency and the housing 20 sponsor and the terms of any agreement between the housing 21 sponsor and any municipality granting tax exemption, as to 22 schedules of rental or carrying charges, income limits as applied to 23 tenants or occupants, or any other limitation imposed upon the 24 housing sponsor as to financial structure, construction or operation 25 of the project;

26 (6) (a) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (7) of subsection 27 b. of this section, in the event of a violation by the housing sponsor 28 of the terms of any agreement between the agency and the housing 29 sponsor, or between the municipality granting tax exemption and 30 the housing sponsor, or in the event of a violation by the housing 31 sponsor of this act or of the terms of the loan agreement or of any rules and regulations of the agency duly promulgated pursuant to 32 33 this act, or in the event that the agency shall determine that any loan 34 or advance from the Housing Development Fund pursuant to section 35 30 of this act is in jeopardy of not being repaid, the agency may, 36 without resort to any judicial process, assume all of the powers and 37 duties of the housing sponsor in the management and operation of 38 the project, including but not limited to the power to receive all 39 revenues and pay all expenses of the project and the power to 40 control all property, including bank accounts and cash, owned by 41 the housing sponsor. The agency may appoint such person or 42 persons whom the agency in its sole discretion deems advisable, 43 including officers or employees of the agency, to perform the 44 functions of the officers or other controlling persons of the housing 45 sponsor. Persons so appointed need not be stockholders or meet 46 other qualifications which may be prescribed by the certificate of 47 incorporation, bylaws or partnership agreement of the housing 48 sponsor. In the absence of fraud or bad faith, persons so appointed

1 shall not be personally liable for debts, obligations or liabilities of 2 the housing sponsor. Persons so appointed shall serve only for a 3 period coexistent with the duration of the violation or until the 4 agency is assured in a manner satisfactory to it that the violation, or 5 violations of a similar nature, will not recur. Persons so appointed 6 shall serve in such capacity without compensation, but shall be 7 entitled to be reimbursed, if and as the certificate of incorporation, 8 bylaws or partnership agreement of the housing sponsor may 9 provide, for all necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of their 10 duties as determined by the agency; and

(b) the provisions of section 18 of P.L. 1991, c. 431 (C.40A:20 12 18) concerning housing projects in financial difficulty shall not
 13 apply to housing projects financed by the agency; and

14 (7) The provisions of this subsection and this act pertaining to 15 the regulation of housing sponsors shall be for purposes of 16 protecting the collateral for any loan or loans; implementing or 17 enforcing any condition, requirement or criterion for loans as 18 provided in this act or other applicable law; and securing the rights 19 and remedies of lenders and bond holders to the extent of the 20 undertakings of the agency. Subject to the foregoing, the agency 21 shall permit, provide for and encourage the right of local housing 22 sponsors to exercise their own initiative and competence in the 23 administration of their assets and the conduct and operation of 24 housing projects and exercise their rights and responsibilities to the 25 fullest extent permitted by law. Therefore, the agency shall 26 exercise its remedies and powers under paragraph (6) of this 27 subsection only with regard to material violations and only after 28 reasonable notice and reasonable opportunity to correct the 29 violation is provided to the housing sponsor in accordance with 30 regulations adopted by the agency.

31 c. Notwithstanding any law, rule or regulation to the contrary,
 32 the provisions of paragraphs (5) and (6) of subsection a. of this
 33 section shall not be applicable to market rate units.

34 <u>d. As used in this section, "market rate unit" means a housing</u>
 35 <u>unit for which occupancy is not subject to limitations based on</u>

- 36 <u>tenant income.</u>
- 37 (cf: P.L.1983, c.530, s.7)
- 38
- 39 11. This act shall take effect immediately.