

Bill Gives Developers Extensions on Permits

Business advocates breathed a sigh of relief last week after Gov. **Jon S. Corzine** signed a bill that gives a three-year extension on commercial and residential building permits so sputtering projects can commence as soon as the economy improves.

"During these hard financial times, the last thing we want to do is frustrate and discourage those who want to bring jobs and tax dollars to the state," said **Jim Leonard**, a lobbyist for the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce. "If this bill was not enacted, we would have lost out on many projects to other states."

An increasing number of permits are scheduled to expire with no construction because the developers can't obtain financing during the credit crunch, according to the measure's supporters.

The measure (A-2867, S-1919) extends state and local permits through July 1, 2010, so developers who have lost funding won't have to spend the time and money to repeat the permitting process.

It applies to permits granted since Jan. 1, 2007. Permits that have expired will be reactivated, according to the bill.

Environmentalists have opposed parts of the measure, saying developers that get permits reactivated will be able to skirt subsequent changes in environmental laws, public health standards and local zoning. — Scott Goldstein

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