

Red Tape Review Group Report Summary

One of the Governor's earliest Executive Orders involved freezing 128 pending or proposed rules as well as ordering the review of nearly 26,00 pages of existing rules

Lt Gov Kim Guadagno was put in charge of the regulatory review on Christie's first day as Governor and given 90 days to issue recommendations for changes.

Part of what drove the Governor to initiate this process is that the 2009 Small Business Survival Index ranked New Jersey 50th out of 50 states and DC based on its public policy climate and a survey of 543 CEOs conducted by Chief Executive Magazine ranked New Jersey 48th among the states for job and business growth.

But local stakeholders also expressed frustration with the rule-making process including:

- A state policy toward affordable housing that is badly broken
- Civil service provisions that frustrate entities to share service and reduce costs
- A culture of state bureaucracy that is not customer-service oriented
- Unfunded mandates on local government and schools contributing to increased taxes
- State agencies plagued by poor information technology leading to chronic delays
- Tax regulations and DEP rules that are needlessly complex, overreach and exceed federal standards
- Business information reporting requirements that are redundant, outmoded and unnecessary
- A State Plan that is ignored by important regulatory decisions and State agency Capital investments

The Group issued their 130 page report on Monday, April 19th

Some of the recommendations include reducing the time developers wait for permits, eliminating unnecessary rules and giving municipalities and counties more authority within their borders. The report also recommended streamlining the rule making process to make it easier to change proposed regulations based on public comment.

The 7 member Red Tape Review Group consisted of representatives of the Legislative and Executive Branches and received written comments from local municipalities, counties and various stakeholder groups, held at least three listening sessions and researched how other state's tackled regulatory reform

A central theme running thru the Report is that the state must achieve a better balance between protecting the public and nurturing free enterprise

The Group heard from many people that there is a great need for the application of “common sense” in rule making and implementation and State Government must learn to operate in a user-friendly manner.

The Report is organized around Legislative, Regulatory and Policy Recommendations. Key recommendations include:

Legislative

- Improve the administrative rule making process by permitting changes based on public comment and altering the sunset requirements for rules
- Expand the power to combat unfunded mandates by allowing more groups to bring complaints before the Council
- Eliminate unnecessary Boards and Commissions
- Reform affordable housing requirements to make it less burdensome for towns
- Provide a means for towns to opt-out of the civil service system

Regulatory

- State agencies should adopt the Common Sense Principles for rule-making
- State agencies should proceed with rule rescissions and modifications aimed at archaic rules, rules that offend common sense and rules that over-reach

Policy

- State agencies should adopt a culture of change
- Establish “one-stop” shopping for state permits for significant economic development projects
- Coordinate planning, capital investment and permitting and elevate the Office of Smart Growth and State Planning Commission as a strategic player in State Government
- Establish an ongoing and bi-artisan Red Tape Review Group to succeed the 90 day Red Tape Review Group

A pdf copy of the Report is available through the Office of the Governor’s website at www.state.nj.us/governor under “About the Lt Governor”.

Prepared by Somerset County Planning Board 4/20/2010