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NJ SEED Considers Governor Christie's Initiatives

Early in his Administration, Governor Christie administered a series of Executive Orders, effective immediately. Through Executive Order No.3, Governor Christie declared that the hundreds of proposed and pending State rules and regulations should be reviewed in a “thoughtful, balanced, and expedient way” in order to assess their possible effects on New Jersey’s economy. Through this Executive Order, a task force deemed the “Red Tape Review Group,” was created to spearhead this review process in a bipartisan and transparent fashion in the hopes of addressing New Jersey’s urgent economic crisis.

The Red Tape Review Group has arrived at a series of unanimous recommendations to improve the regulatory process and thereby promote job creation and retention, economic growth and investment in New Jersey. NJ SEED reviewed all of the Red Tape Review Group findings along with the Governor’s Executive Orders and determined that, of all of the relevant findings and Executive Orders, NJ SEED opposes none of them and supports the following initiatives:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Permits and Licensing

As stated in our State Briefing Book, NJ SEED urges the State to give businesses a quick, efficient system when it comes to permits and licensing without compromising environmental protection. This change and simplification can make New Jersey a more hospitable climate for businesses in NJ. The Red Tape Group parallels this NJ SEED initiative, and suggested making the permit obtainment process simpler.

The Red Tape Group recommends that Cabinet Officers of state agencies inspire their departments to see that New Jersey is a satisfactory place to do business. The group also believes that a “change management” process must be put into place following standard organization development theories, practices, and processes. Thirdly, the group recommended an Executive Order be issued to ensure that Cabinet Officers establish *quantifiable results-oriented goals* and that reports be issued each year to show progress toward those goals. The Red Tape Group challenges State agencies not to measure success based on the number of permit applications processed, fines imposed, or pages of regulations adopted. Rather, it should be measured by the ability of the Department to improve the quality of life for the citizens of New Jersey. Finally, the Red Tape Group recommends creating an “one-stop shop” for permits, a single point of operations to coordinate the submission and resolution of applications for business permits. This recommendation reflects the need to simplify such processes, allowing economic processes the needed space to take effect, a change from the current ways of business that NJSEED has long advocated for.

Lowering the Cost of Doing Business: Increasing Regulatory Efficiency

As stated in our State Briefing book, NJSEED urges the Administration and Legislature to enact balanced policies that can ultimately drive regulatory efficiency. NJ SEED believes this will help both the environment and our economy. NJ SEED supports the development and use of streamlined management systems by all government agencies that eliminate waste and provide for an efficient regulatory process. The Red Tape Review Group has similarly concluded that the inefficiency and the excessive costs of regulation have made it prohibitively expensive to conduct business in NJ. The Group recognizes that New Jersey must change the way it does business, to bring our state back as a viable environment for economic growth.

The Red Tape Group recommends creating a new model for the State's economic development, investment, and job creation programs. Key participants of this model include the Lieutenant Governor, State Government Programs, and **New Jersey business leaders**.

Secondly, the Red Tape Group recommends the encouragement of state planning to be used as a tool to align all levels of government and work to streamline regulations in a way that will focus capital spending.

The Group also recommends centralizing the State's Information Technology systems, making it easier for business to access information. The report says that taxpayers and business owners can expect efficient access to integrated services, and simple methods to fulfill reporting obligations. This will save businesses time and money, and ultimately promotes a more efficient state government.

Establishment of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors

For more than thirty years, NJ SEED has supported balanced public policies that create private sector jobs and bolster our economy. As echoed by Governor Christie in Executive Order No.5, NJ SEED also believes the fiscal well-being of the State of New Jersey and the growth of economic opportunities for New Jersey citizens and New Jersey businesses should be major priorities of this Administration.

We support the Governor's decision to create a Council of Economic Advisors and commend his dedication to seek out solutions to keep New Jersey's economy sustainable. NJ SEED has established itself as a reputable and knowledgeable coalition and hopes the Christie Administration will call on our members for high-quality advice on an ongoing basis regarding State, regional, local and national economic conditions;

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

NJ DEP Accountability

NJ SEED urges the Governor and Legislature to monitor the progress of the NJ DEP and to provide input when necessary. The Red Tap Review Group has recognized the need for governmental transparency and the Lieutenant Governor is working to keep agencies accountable and united in their goal-orientated approaches.

Site Remediation Program Reform

A number of regulations have been selected by the DEP, as per Executive Order No.2, as candidates for repeal or revision. The following regulations pertain to NJ SEED issues and were a part of the 180 day review process.

1. N.J.A.C. 7:26E – Re-adoption of the Technical Requirements for Site Remediation
2. N.J.A.C. 7:26C - The Site Remediation Reform Act (SRRA)

In closing, the Red Tape Review Group findings, along with the Governor's Executive Orders, reflect an understanding that New Jersey's business climate must be improved. Through the establishment of the Common Sense Principles, as per Executive Order No.2, the Red Tape Review Group is committed to enlisting the perspectives of individuals outside the governmental sector when developing further regulatory processes. This commitment for an "outsiders" voice has effectively opened the door for NJ SEED and its members to become an integral part of the Christie Administration to come. We look forward to working with the policy leaders further.