

**SENATE BILL NO. 996**

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 996 with my recommendations for reconsideration.

This bill is a fiscal year 2016 supplemental appropriation to the Department of Community Affairs for the Lead Hazard Control Assistance Fund. While I have the same concerns as the sponsors concerning potential contamination from lead-based paint, I cannot support this appropriation outside of the budget process, particularly in light of the fact that I have committed \$10 million from existing 2016 budget funds to support a new program that will utilize modern approaches to address lead paint hazards.

The use of lead paint in housing was banned in 1978. While homes constructed since then are not at risk, homes constructed prior to 1978 potentially contain lead-based paint. New Jersey has been a national leader in combatting the hazards posed by lead based paint. To that end, the State has undertaken significant efforts to protect New Jerseyans from lead paint hazards and to address potential contamination in those homes. Such efforts have included education, testing and screening (including universal screening of children ages 1 and 2), regular and systematic inspections of multi-family housing for lead paint hazards, and requiring remediation, including relocation assistance, when lead paint hazards are identified. My administration has been committed to furthering these efforts and has devoted significant resources to addressing lead paint hazards.

Currently, New Jersey spends approximately \$7 million annually for lead paint inspections in 200,000 housing units. In addition to these inspections, \$11 million in federal home

visitation funds is used to support Department of Children and Families' programs that bring nurses and community health workers into the homes of at-risk families to provide information and referrals on child health and safety issues, including strategies to reduce exposures to lead. Further, the State has allocated \$5.4 million in federal grant funding to screen more than 14,000 children, pregnant women, and recovery workers for lead poisoning in areas impacted by Hurricane Sandy. Since 2011, in addition to funding received from the federal government, my administration has spent approximately \$30 million in State funds on lead protection programs.

Recently, I called for \$10 million in the FY'17 budget to fund a new mandate for schools to test for lead in water, and announced that the Department of Health will lower its threshold for public health interventions when lead is detected in children.

I recognize, however, ongoing concerns regarding potential contamination from lead-based paint. As a result, I recently announced that an additional \$10 million in the fiscal year 2016 budget had been identified by my administration to expand ongoing efforts to combat lead paint hazards. This money will fund a new program in the Department of Community Affairs that will employ lead-safe initiatives that are consistent with the modern approach to lead paint hazards. Utilizing these improved methods should enable the State to remediate more homes contaminated with lead paint in a more cost-effective manner that is less disruptive to a home's residents. Notably, many of the sponsors of this bill have indicated their support for this new program.

Therefore, I cannot support this supplemental appropriation of additional money for lead abatement. Rather, I propose

having the Department of Community Affairs, which will administer the new lead-safe initiative I recently announced, monitor its enhanced program and provide a report to the Governor and the Legislature at the end of 2017 regarding the program's implementation and status.

Accordingly, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 996 and recommend that it be amended as follows:

Page 2, Title, Lines 1-4: Delete in their entirety and insert "An Act concerning lead-based paint hazards."

Page 2, Section 1, Lines 9-12: Delete in their entirety and insert "1. The Commissioner of Community Affairs shall undertake a review of the implementation of the fiscal year 2016 \$10 million funded lead-safe program and shall report findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later than December 31, 2017 on the status of the program. The report shall contain, without limitation, a review of the program and its effectiveness, in terms of the cost, the distribution of funds, and the lead-safe methods used."

Respectfully,

[seal]

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Thomas P. Scrivo

Chief Counsel to the Governor