



January 6, 2012

The Honorable Christopher J. Christie
Governor, State of New Jersey
The State House
125 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625

**RE: Absolute Veto Request – S-2771/A-3895
Duplicative Exterior Inspections Bill Needlessly Drives-Up Housing Costs**

Dear Governor Christie:

On behalf of the New Jersey Apartment Association (NJAA), and our members who provide quality, safe, clean and affordable rental housing to hundreds of thousands of New Jersey residents, we respectfully request that you swiftly apply an absolute veto to **S-2771/A-3895** when it reaches your desk.

Multi-family apartments in New Jersey, unlike those in Philadelphia where this bill originated, are already subject to rigorous inspection and maintenance regulations established and enforced statewide through the Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Act (P.L. 1967, c. 76) and its accompanying regulations promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (N.J.A.C. 5:10). The Multiple Dwelling Act and its accompanying 90-pages of regulations, have, for nearly 45 years, served to ensure the proper maintenance and repair of multiple dwellings. Existing regulations include provisions requiring safe maintenance of apartment building exteriors, including, building façades, foundations, and any attached objects.

Floor amendments added in the General Assembly move New Jersey backwards by transferring enforcement of exterior façade inspection and maintenance requirements from the State of New Jersey to local, municipal enforcement agencies. **This devolving of regulatory authority from a centralized, statewide agency to 566 different agencies is unwise and could lead to chaos for professional multi-family owners and managers – and our residents.**

While the NJAA shares the legislative sponsor's desire to ensure that building facades and exteriors remain well-maintained and inspected, **these bills as currently crafted will move our state backwards** by creating a less efficient model for ensuring resident safety, driving up the cost of providing housing, and imposing new mandates on municipalities.

We reiterate our call to craft façade inspection legislation that incorporates and builds-upon the 45 years of success New Jersey has enjoyed with the landmark Hotel & Multiple Dwelling Act, not legislation which seeks to dismantle the proven, efficient, and reliable statewide system we have today.

The NJAA and our members take safety seriously. The safety of our employees; the safety of our residents; the safety of our resident's guests, and safety of the general public, remains a priority, 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

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The current statewide system addressing exterior façade maintenance, inspection, and Code enforcement has served New Jersey well for nearly 45 years. At no time during any of the Committee discussions did any stakeholders present evidence of an emergent need to alter the current regulatory system governing multi-family building exteriors.

S-2771/A-3895 is an unnecessary solution in search of a nonexistent problem. New Jersey already has an efficient statewide maintenance and inspection system that works – and we are the only state in the nation that can **proudly** make that statement.

The NJAA respectfully requests that you veto this unwise initiative without delay.

Sincerely,

Jean Maddalon
Executive Director

Conor G. Fennessy
Vice President – Government Affairs

CC: Raymond Brandes, Esq. – Governor’s Counsel
The Hon. Richard Constable III, Esq. – Commissioner, Dept. of Community Affairs

The New Jersey Apartment Association represents over 600 multi-family rental housing providers throughout New Jersey. We are a statewide organization dedicated to maintaining, improving and building new and affordable rental housing that serves hundreds of thousands of New Jersey’s working families, young couples and seniors