



For Immediate Release

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Littoral Society Applauds Legislative Approval of Beach Access Bill

Trenton, NJ – Today, with nearly unanimous votes, New Jersey's General Assembly and Senate passed a bill protecting public access to beaches in the state.

The Littoral Society would like to thank NJ lawmakers for taking this action and the Society looks forward to final endorsement of the bill by Gov. Phil Murphy.

“The beach access bill makes clear that the public has a right to get to and enjoy the waterfronts of New Jersey and that the State should create new public access, enhance existing access, and defend against attempts to block access,” said Tim Dillingham, Executive Director of the American Littoral Society. “This bill provides the tools and direction to achieve all those goals, and to open a new chapter in the protection of the Public Trust Doctrine in New Jersey.”

With the governor's signature, A4221/S1074 would codify state obligations to strengthen efforts to ensure that the public has meaningful access to, and use of, the shoreline, tidal waters and other areas subject to the Public Trust Doctrine. The bills will provide authority to address chronic problems limiting public access to tidal waters throughout New Jersey and provide needed policy direction to the Department of Environmental Protection to administer the regulations.

The bill applies not only to beaches, but to riverfront areas in the northern part of the state such as the Hudson River, where rampant development has walled off large sections of the waterfront.

Previous beach access guidelines for NJ municipalities ended in 2015, when a state court ruled that the DEP over-stepped its authority in issuing the regulations.

The new law is necessary because in the past shore towns have frequently attempted to limit beach access by reducing public parking, cutting off pathways from streets to the waterfront, and not providing support facilities such as restrooms or dune walk-overs. Those limitations came despite millions of tax dollars being spent to restore and widen NJ beaches.

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The American Littoral Society is a member-supported, coastal conservation non-profit that promotes the study and conservation of marine life and habitat, protects the coast from harm and engages communities to do the same through work in education, advocacy, and conservation. Founded in 1961, the American Littoral Society has regional offices in New Jersey, New York and Florida. For more information, visit www.LittoralSociety.org.

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