

News From NJ Senate Democrats
July 1, 2005

VITALE-SMITH BILL TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL BONDING FOR
REFURBISHMENT OF AMBULANCES, PUBLIC SAFETY VEHICLES
APPROVED

TRENTON - A bill sponsored by Senators Joseph F. Vitale and Bob Smith to authorize local governments to issue five-year bonds for the reimbursement of an ambulance, rescue vehicle or similar public safety vehicle was approved by the Senate yesterday by a vote of 36-1.

"The fleets of public safety vehicles that serve New Jersey residents are a vital component in the State's network of rapid response health care," said Senator Vitale, D-Middlesex. "A state of the art ambulance or rescue vehicle can mean the difference between life or death for patients being transported to a hospital or other primary care facility. Municipalities need to have access to greater bonding ability to keep their rescue vehicles and ambulances in top condition."

The bill, S-2141, would amend the "Local Bond Law" to permit all local units to authorize the issuance of five-year bonds for the refurbishment of an ambulance, rescue vehicle or similar vehicle provided that the refurbishment will extend the life of the vehicle for at least five years. Currently, the law only permits the authorization of five-year bonds for fire engines and other firefighting vehicles.

"Currently, we allow municipalities to bond for the refurbishment of fire trucks and other firefighting equipment, but to have a truly top notch public safety response, ambulances and other public safety vehicles cannot be neglected," said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset. "We need to give municipalities the appropriate tools to respond in any emergency, and by expanding municipal bonding authority to include refurbishment of ambulances and public safety vehicles, we are ensuring a high-quality response to local residents health care needs."

The bill now heads to the Governor to be signed
into law.