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## **SMITH BILL TO ENCOURAGE MUNICIPALITIES TO THINK GREEN SIGNED INTO LAW**

TRENTON – A bill sponsored by Senator Bob Smith which allows municipal planning boards to consider environmental sustainability and green buildings in creating their municipal master plans was signed into law yesterday by Governor Corzine.

“As more and more State residents are becoming aware of terms like ‘carbon footprint’ and making environmentally-conscious decisions, it’s time local government followed suit,” said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex, the Chair of the Senate Environment Committee. “We need to set the example for our constituents that environmentalism and progress are not mutually-exclusive. By giving municipalities more latitude in going green when making zoning plans for the future, we can send a strong message to State residents about the importance of protecting our shared environment.”

The bill, S-1788, allows municipal planning boards to consider the environmental consequences of future zoning decisions when drafting the municipal master plan, a document which outlines the physical, environmental, social and economic objectives of municipal zoning for the six years following adoption of the master plan. Specifically, the new law authorizes planning boards to include green buildings, which minimize environmental impact and take advantage of clean, renewable energy resources, in planning decisions. The planning boards will also be able to take into account the effect that future development might have on the local and global environment, and encourage water and land conservation on the municipal level.

“I think the State is definitely making a concerted effort to push for a greener future,” said Senator Smith, who has advocated for a greater role of renewable energy systems in meeting the State’s energy needs. “We want to make sure that we’re being responsible stewards of the planet, so that future generations of New Jerseyans can enjoy the natural beauty of the Garden State. By giving municipal planners the authority to consider environmental impact, and promote cleaner, greener technology, we’ll be able to encourage environmentally-friendly development around the State.”

The bill was unanimously approved by the Senate in June, and was approved by a vote of 74-1 with one abstention by the Assembly in February.