

2025 NJ Environmental Update: State Development and Redevelopment Plan Update

January 23, 2025

Cullen and Dykman circulates periodic environmental updates on matters of interest to its clients and colleagues. This is the first such update for 2025.

When the State Planning Act was signed into law in 1985, it was believed that the law would lead to a new era in cohesive and holistic statewide planning policy. For a while that appeared to be the case, as the State Planning Commission actively engaged in creating a statewide plan, the first of which was adopted in 1992. Over time, however, less attention was paid to the effort, to the point where the Commission was inactive for years.

The Murphy administration has indicated that this may now change (emphasis on “may”). On December 4, 2024, the State Planning Commission approved a [Preliminary Draft of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan](#) identifying the State’s priorities and strategies for growth management over the next 25 years. The 168-page Plan, if finalized before the end of Governor Murphy’s term in January 2026, will be the first Plan Update to be adopted since 2001, and may lead to significant changes in land use and infrastructure planning and policy that impact housing, urban revitalization and environmental protection.

Just by way of example, the Plan Update now recognizes the 2004 statutory protections afforded to the Highlands Region ([see N.J.S.A. 13:20-1 et seq.](#)), the need to designate and protect flood prone areas, and the need to address the implications of sea-level rise. These considerations will impact both large scale projects, such as highways and major transportation hubs, as well as smaller projects, such as installation of electric vehicle charging stations throughout the state. In addition, the Plan Update emphasizes the role of the Environmental Justice Law (N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157 et seq.) in the placement of warehouses and other industrial facilities. It also calls for a sweeping re-evaluation of mandatory parking requirements and other policies affecting how efficiently land across New Jersey is utilized and developed.

If adopted as proposed, the Plan Update would also be the first to explicitly acknowledge and address climate change-related considerations. To this end, the Plan Update encourages policies and planning that incorporate mitigation strategies for flooding and other climate-related hazards, and supports the use of wind turbines, solar panels, and other decarbonization measures in the coming decades.

The 60-day public comment period for the Plan Update runs from February 12, 2025 to April 16, 2025 and public hearings will be held in all of New Jersey’s 21 counties. The proceedings, and a subsequent review by all counties to ensure that the Plan Update is consistent with existing land use policies, are designed to ensure “cross-

acceptance” and consistent application across all levels of government upon final adoption, which is tentatively scheduled for late Fall 2025. Developers, local governments, and other stakeholders must remain informed about the Plan Upgrade’s progress to ensure that future project designs and planning decisions meet the new Plan Update’s requirements if and when it takes effect.

Should you have any questions about the proposed update to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan or how to submit effective comments thereon, please contact Amie C. Kalac (AKalac@cullenllp.com), Neil Yoskin (NYoskin@cullenllp.com).

Please note that this is a general overview of the law and does not constitute legal advice.

Practices

- Environmental

Attorneys

- Amie C. Kalac
- Neil Yoskin