

Legislative Update
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The New Jersey Senate and General Assembly has returned from the summer recess and is expected to maintain an active schedule for the remainder of 2004.

The most critical factor in the return of the Legislature is the environment created by the expected November 15th resignation of Governor McGreevey. Senate President Richard Codey will become Acting Governor at that time while remaining the Senate President. This is the second time in recent New Jersey governmental history that this has occurred (Governor Whitman's resignation in 2000 to join the Bush Administration made Senate President Don DiFrancesco the Acting Governor).

There are several bills that the MTA/NJ will be active on in the next few months including:

Assembly Bill 2624/Senate Bill 1512 – “Boating Safety Bill”

As you are aware, the legislation that was originally promoted by the MTANJ was dramatically amended by the Senate in June and returned to the Assembly for their action. Since then we have met with Assembly sponsor, Assemblyman Bob Smith, to discuss our concerns and to propose alternate language to the Senate bill. In addition, we have also been in discussion with the Senate regarding our concerns and their consideration of amending the bill again with MTA/NJ language.

Senate Bill 852 – Dredging Project funding

The bill appropriates \$1,080,000 to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) from the "1996 Dredging and Containment Facility Fund," for the remaining portion of the State share of the cost of the Intracoastal Waterway Feasibility Study. The funds will go towards the State Channel Dredging Program. The bill, supported by the MTA/NJ, was signed into law by Governor McGreevey on August 31, 2004.

Assembly Bill 3080 – Liability Insurance Mandate

The bill requires that every owner of power vessels registered in this State shall maintain liability insurance coverage insuring against loss for bodily injury or death sustained by any person arising out of the ownership, maintenance, operation or use of a boat or watercraft. We will be meeting with the bill sponsor to discuss the MTA/NJ concerns soon. There is currently no Senate version of the legislation.

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Styrene Tax

A law was signed in June that will have a dramatic impact on the boating community in New Jersey. The law established a new tax on toxic air emissions and included in the list of hundreds of chemicals is Styrene, a major component in boat building. Styrene's classification and tax under the law would impact New Jersey's boat builders by as much as \$500,000 and the economic impact to the industry is obvious.

A meeting was held with the staff of Assembly Budget Committee Chairman Louis Greenwald to request relief under this law in an attempt to avoid the decimation of the boating industry and of many South Jersey communities that rely on the industry.