

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

County Government with a Unified Voice

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism, and Historic Preservation
Committee

DATE: March 5, 2012

RE: **SENATE, NO. 1452** (*Weinberg D-37*)

The New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) is a strong advocate for transparency and openness in local government; and, supports the concept of S-1452 to provide greater access to government records.

As you know, this legislation would in part require a custodian of records to provide a requestor with comprehensive written notice on redacted information; and, with an index that describes certain available government records. At a time in which local governments are struggling to make ends meet by reducing critical staff, essential services, and capital improvement projects, county officials will find it very difficult to allocate the necessary staff, time, and resources to carry out these added job functions and responsibilities. In addition to this concern, this legislation does not seem to provide guidance for local governments on what constitutes "voluminous" with respect to prohibited special service charges for requests on budgets, bills, vouchers, contracts, and public employee salary information.

With this in mind, NJAC respectfully requests that the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee have the opportunity to review this legislation in more detail to determine its fiscal impact on local governing bodies. NJAC is committed to advocating for legislation, regulations, and policy directives that empower county governments to operate more effectively and efficiently. As a non-partisan organization that represents the only true regional form of government in the State with a unified and proactive voice, NJAC is dedicated to advancing innovative programs and initiatives for the sole purpose of saving valuable taxpayer dollars. Thank you for your time and consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact us at (609) 394 - 3467 with any questions or concerns.

