



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Leaders for Responsible Planning to Seek Stay Against Unfair and Burdensome Housing Mandates Announced by the Department of Community Affairs

Montvale, NJ – Following today's release of affordable housing mandate numbers by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Local Leaders for Responsible Planning (LLRP), led by Montvale Mayor Mike Ghassali, announced that they will be asking the Court to place a hold on the Fourth-Round affordable housing mandate.

The DCA's recent calculations confirm what local leaders feared—the housing obligations are excessive and will strain municipal resources beyond their capacity.

"These numbers were expected to be burdensome, but the reality is even worse," said Mayor Ghassali. "The State has handed us housing requirements that defy reality and will force local governments to stretch their resources to the breaking point, all while diverting attention from other critical community needs."

Last month, the LLRP filed a lawsuit contending that the new obligations go beyond the Mount Laurel constitutional requirements and amount to an unfunded mandate, leaving local governments without the financial means to comply.

The State was required to respond to the lawsuit earlier this week, but it instead filed a motion asking the Court for another thirty (30) days to do so. The LLRP did not consent to this request because time is of the essence for them, with each municipality facing a January 31, 2025, deadline to adopt binding affordable housing determinations.

Considering today's numbers, LLRP announces that it now intends to seek a stay of the new law, so that it is placed on hold while the lawsuit makes its way through the court system.

"The LLRP municipalities contend they will be irreparably harmed by having to comply with this new law over a narrow three-month period, all while substantial legal challenges to the law's constitutionality are pending in court," explained coalition attorney Michael L. Collins, Esq.

LLRP is also calling on other municipalities to join the fight. "This is not just about one town. Every community in New Jersey should be concerned about the strain these numbers will place on their budgets, infrastructure, and services," added Ghassali.

LLRP continues to stand united in opposition to the unfair burden being placed on municipalities and urges towns across the state to join the fight for responsible planning.

"We invite every town in New Jersey to be part of this effort. Together, we can push for a fair, equitable solution that protects our communities from being overwhelmed by these unsustainable mandates," said Mayor Ghassali.

"Local Leaders for Responsible Planning" is led by Montvale (Bergen) and includes the following municipalities that have joined as Plaintiffs to the litigation: Township of Denville, Borough of Florham Park, Borough of Hillsdale, Township of Mannington, Township of Millburn, Township of Montville, Borough of Old Tappan, Borough of Totowa, Borough of Allendale, Borough of Westwood, Township of Hanover, Township of Wyckoff, Borough of Wharton, Borough of Mendham, Borough of Oradell, Borough of Closter, Township of West Amwell, Township of Washington, Borough of Norwood, and Township of Parsippany-Troy Hills.

The lawsuit is docketed as Borough of Montvale v. State of New Jersey, Superior Court of New Jersey, MER-L-001778-24. The Coalition is represented by Michael L. Collins, Esq. of King, Moench & Collins LLP.

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