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## New Jersey Legislature held its final session of the year

On Thursday, December 18th, The New Jersey Legislature held its final session of the year, ending with a flourish of activity. The State Senate and General Assembly considered a total of 82 bills in voting sessions that began in the late afternoon and stretched into the evening. While the end of 2014 marks the midway point in the 2014-2015 session, the day was very reminiscent to a lame duck session with the board lists in both houses being revised multiple times throughout the week. Legislation was added and removed at a dizzying pace in the days leading up to the final session.

When the caucuses concluded on Thursday and Legislators filed into their respective voting chambers, there were myriad issues up for debate. The Assembly considered 54 bills including legislation requiring the use of goods made in the United States to qualify for public contracts (the "Made in America" bill) and legislation dealing with Medicaid Managed Care Organizations. The Senate session was equally hectic, with over 30 bills up for consideration, ranging from solvency requirements for certain insurers to the "Water Infrastructure Protection Act."

The Legislature now heads home for its annual Holiday break. The Senate is set to return January 12th to begin an ambitious schedule that includes eight committee days and 3 voting sessions through mid-March. The Assembly has not yet released its schedule for the beginning of 2015 but we likewise expect it to be busy. Two high profile legislative issues which received attention, earned sick leave and permit extension, are detailed below.

### Earned Sick Leave

The New Jersey Legislature is currently considering A2354 / S785; legislation enacting mandatory earned sick leave for all employees in the State. Earlier this week the legislation was considered and amended by the Assembly Budget Committee. The legislation as currently written requires employers to provide 1 hour of earned sick for every 30 hours worked with accrued limitations capped at 40 hours for establishments with fewer than 10 employees and 72 hours for those with more than 10 employees. In addition the legislation also adds new reporting requirements and penalties for failure to comply with the regulations. The only exemption to the proposed legislation is for Construction Unions with collective bargaining agreements.

The enactment of earned sick leave legislation has become a nationwide effort. Thus far two states, Connecticut and California have adopted earned sick leave legislation but their laws require benefits for establishments having 50 or more employees and allow flexibility for employers with existing sick leave programs to continue their benefits as long as the program meets minimum statutory standards.

In addition, a number of New Jersey municipalities have adopted their own earned sick leave ordinances. The municipalities included Jersey City, Newark, East Orange, Paterson, Passaic and Irvington. On Tuesday, Montclair and Trenton become the newest communities to adopt earned sick leave ordinances through ballot questions.

### Permit Extension

In an effort to help developers protect their substantial investments in New Jersey projects, as well as spur future economic growth and job creation. The NJ Senate and General Assembly voted on S2551 / A3815, legislation that grants a one (1) year extension to the "Permit Extension Act of 2008." Specifically, this legislation will save developers the extensive costs and time consuming process associated with starting the permitting process over from square one under existing statutory and regulatory provisions in the Garden State. The committee amendments adopted on earlier this week changed the extension from two (2) years to one (1) year with the proposed extension ending December 31, 2015.

The "Permit Extension Act of 2008" originally suspended the running of certain government approvals until July 1, 2010. P.L.2012, c.48 extended the end date of the "extension period" to December 31, 2014. This bill would further extend the end date to December 31, 2015. In accordance with the tolling provision provided in the "Permit Extension Act of 2008," no approval would be extended beyond six months after the conclusion of the extension period, or until June 30, 2016 under this bill. Permits which have been granted by State, regional, county, and municipal agencies would be extended for an additional year.