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Monday, May 14, 2018

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Schepisi slams Murphy for cutting affordable housing funding

TRENTON, N.J. – Gov. Phil Murphy’s proposed budget would use nearly \$80 million to help fund affordable housing projects to fill gaps in his spending plans. Assemblywoman Holly Schepisi is having none of it.

At the conference of mayors a couple weeks ago in Atlantic City, Schepisi spoke to dozens of mayors who said that affordable housing obligations were crushing their own budgets.

“The affordable housing funds are already far below what towns really need to fulfill court-ordered projects,” said Schepisi (R-Bergen). “Mayors from both sides of the aisle have pleaded for help from the state on this issue and Governor Murphy is callously ignoring their calls by cutting the only funding they have, and that isn’t enough in the first place. The affordable housing issue will continue to crush our communities until the legislature and the governor decide to stop turning the other way and actually address this problem.”

Governor Murphy plans to redirect \$59.3 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and another \$18.5 million from the Housing and Mortgage Financing Agency. Those two funds are the largest source of relief for municipalities who are forced by courts to provide affordable housing, regardless of demand.

Schepisi introduced a package of bills to address the affordable housing crisis last year, but they have not yet been considered for a vote. Schepisi’s affordable housing package includes:

Ending municipal obligations and requiring COAH to calculate and administer a statewide obligation (A1645/A1647/ACR80).

Requiring COAH to determine if towns can afford new housing and establishing a challenge to the obligation (A1646/A1648).

Eliminating the urban aid exemption from affordable housing obligations and amending the constitution to prohibit exclusionary zoning (A1649/ACR79).

Terminating the builder’s remedy that coerces affordable housing (A1650).

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