



Court Rules Meadowlands Commission Must Provide Affordable Housing

By Evelyn Lee - 5/21/2007

The Appellate Division of the state Superior Court today issued a decision ordering the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) to comply with the Mount Laurel doctrine to create affordable housing as part of a plan to bring 57,000 new jobs to the Meadowlands.

The NJMC argued that it did not have an obligation to plan and zone for affordable housing in the district. Rejecting that argument, the court found that when "the State entrusts one of its agencies with complete control over the planning and zoning of a vast amount of land, approximately 21,000 acres," that agency is not free to "exercise its authority without taking affirmative steps to ensure adequate affordable housing."

This decision is the second time this year that a court found the state's housing rules to be unconstitutional. Back in January, the Appellate Division invalidated the Council on Affordable Housing's (COAH) Third Round rules for determining how towns comply with their Mount Laurel affordable housing obligations. The Appellate Court required COAH to adopt new regulations, but COAH announced last week that it will not comply with that deadline. COAH has asked for an extension until February 2008 to adopt new regulations.