

**Testimony in support of A3143 and A3295
Assembly Budget Committee****December 14, 2010**

137 West Hanover Street
Trenton, NJ 08618
(609) 393-0008 Tel.
(609) 393-1189 Fax
www.njfuture.org

Contact: [Chris Sturm](#), (609) 393-0008, 114.

New Jersey Future is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes smart growth – growth that strengthens our communities, provides more convenient transportation choices, and preserves our open spaces.

A3143

New Jersey Future urges you to approve A3143 to allow mixed-use projects to qualify for the Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Program. That program gives our cities a great tool to transform the areas around their train station into thriving job centers and sustainable urban neighborhoods – the kind of places that will attract employers as well as young professionals and empty nesters who are looking for interesting, environmentally sustainable lifestyles. We commend the chair for his leadership on this issue.

A3295

New Jersey Future thanks Assemblyman Coutinho for his leadership in promoting sustainable development and smart growth through A3295. We support A3295 because it gives municipalities an important tool to promote the kind of higher density, smart growth projects that make sense in our cities and towns, near our train stations and other smart growth locations. As you know, today the Municipal Land Use Law permits towns to approve General Development Plans (or GDPs) only for projects that have a large footprint. A3295 will allow towns to approve GDPs for projects that are large in terms of the number of units or square footage, even if they don't take up much land.

The amendments to the definition of smart growth area are important. They make this bill consistent with three other statutes that refer to smart growth areas. The basic approach of promoting growth in good locations near existing communities and infrastructure, and not on our farmland and forests, is the main strategy of New Jersey's State Plan. We at New Jersey Future look forward to working with the Legislature over the next year to strengthen the State Plan so it can direct more powerful incentives for economic growth into smart growth areas. At that time, we should take a careful look at the definition of smart growth areas to make sure we're getting it right – for example, we don't think it makes sense to give the DEP Commissioner a special privilege to create smart growth areas. But that kind of amendment can wait until we are looking at the state planning issues more holistically.

At this time, we urge you to vote yes on A3295, to give municipalities an important tool to facilitate smart, sustainable development. Thank you for your consideration.