



**Testimony before the Assembly Appropriations Committee
A2076/S1323, Revises various requirements of New Jersey Aspire Program and establishes
Redevelopment Project Bridge Financing Program.**

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**By
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President of the Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce**

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman Swain and members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee. I am Michael Chait, President of the Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce. Our organization represents 400 businesses and tens of thousands of employees across Atlantic County.

On behalf of the Greater Atlantic City Chamber, we strongly support Bill A2076. This bill represents the legislative process at its finest. The sponsors have worked diligently with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, developers, and business leaders to address real-world challenges that have emerged in program implementation.

Two amendments particularly demonstrate the thoughtful refinement of this program. For projects in Government-Restricted Municipalities, the maximum total tax credit has been increased from 80 to 85 percent of project costs. This adjustment recognizes the unique challenges of development in these communities and will help make more projects viable. Additionally, while standardizing most projects to a 10-year eligibility period, the amendments provide important flexibility by allowing applicants in Government-Restricted Municipalities to opt for a 5-year period.

One of the most significant improvements addresses the fundamental challenge of tax credit monetization. Under the current structure, with credits issued over 10 years, developers face substantial carrying costs that can reduce the effective value of credits. This diminished value makes many otherwise viable projects infeasible, particularly in markets like Atlantic City where mid-sized residential developments are desperately needed.

These amendments provide important flexibility around building sales during the eligibility period, making projects more financially viable while maintaining program integrity. We particularly appreciate the thoughtful approach to enhancing credit values for projects that tackle challenging sites or include important community benefits. The ability to get additional credits for redeveloping stranded assets, meeting certain housing configuration requirements, or implementing local hiring programs provides meaningful incentives for developers to take on more complex projects.



This is exactly how government and private industry should work together - identifying challenges, proposing solutions, and refining programs to better serve their intended purpose. The collaborative process that led to these amendments sets an example of how legislation can be improved through stakeholder engagement and practical experience.

The Greater Atlantic City Chamber stands ready to work with the State Legislature. Thank you.