

[MUNICIPAL LETTERHEAD]

Date: [Insert Date]

**The Honorable [Name of Senator] The Honorable [Name of Assemblyman/woman]
[District Number] Legislative Office [Address]**

RE: STRONGEST OPPOSITION to S3174/A2137 – Protecting Local Control and Municipal Budgets

Dear Senator [Name] and Assemblyman/woman [Name],

As the Mayor of [Name of Municipality], I am writing to express my strong opposition to **S3174/A2137**, which seeks to fundamentally alter the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code (UCC) by allowing for the immediate privatization of building inspections.

While this bill is being framed as an "efficiency" measure, it represents a direct threat to the fiscal stability of our municipality and the safety of our residents. I urge you to oppose this legislation for the following reasons:

- **Erosion of Home Rule:** Current law in the Uniform Construction Code already provides a "safety valve" by allowing developers to hire private firms if a municipality fails to provide timely service. This new bill removes that common-sense guardrail, allowing developers to bypass our professional municipal staff "for any reason" from day one. This strips the local governing body of its right to manage its own departments and oversee development in its own community.
- **Fiscal Instability for Taxpayers:** Our construction office operates on a budget funded by permit fees. These fees cover the salaries of our certified inspectors, many of whom are dedicated, union-protected public servants. By allowing developers to opt-out "at will" and demand fee reimbursements, S3174 creates a volatile revenue environment. We cannot effectively budget or maintain a professional workforce when our revenue can be pulled away without cause, potentially shifting the financial burden of running these offices onto our local property taxpayers.
- **Safety and Long-Term Liability:** Municipal inspectors are neutral public servants whose only priority is the safety of the structure. Allowing a developer to hand-pick and pay their own inspector creates an inherent conflict of interest. Furthermore, because the municipality remains the "custodian of record," our town will carry the administrative costs and the long-term legal liability for these projects—while the revenue needed to fund that oversight is handed back to the developer.

Public safety should not be a "pay-to-play" private industry. We take great pride in the professional and timely service our municipal inspectors provide to our residents and business owners. **S3174/A2137** penalizes high-performing towns and undermines the integrity of our local government.

I ask for your commitment to protect our municipal budgets and the safety of our communities by voting **NO** on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Mayor [Name] [Municipality Name]