



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Passes Honesty in Permit Processing Act

DEAN G. SKELOS March 13, 2012

| ISSUE: **GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

Bill Holds Government More Accountable and Facilitates Business Growth

The New York State Senate today passed legislation to help professionals and businesses by reducing delays in the issuance of permits, licenses and other approvals needed from state agencies.

The Honesty in Permit Processing Act (S.2461), sponsored by Senator Tom Libous (R-C-I, Binghamton), would require state agencies to figure out and publicize the average time it takes to process permits. The bill would then give the agency a certain amount of time past the average to issue a permit or refund the application fee.

“The Honesty in Permit Processing Act makes government more accountable and provides taxpayers with reasonable expectations for when their licenses or permits arrive,” said Senator Libous. “I wrote this legislation after hearing from many of my constituents who are small business owners. They had waited months to simply hear back from state agencies on permits that were essential to running their businesses. It's only right that the state be accountable and does its job rather than stand in their way.”

“State agencies are responsible for processing many different kinds of licenses and permits for professionals, small businesses trying to make a living, and for those seeking recreation,”

Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos said. “By shining a light on the permitting process, we can help prevent unjustified, lengthy delays that could hinder the public’s ability to work, build a business, or enjoy the outdoors.”

New York requires teachers, doctors, nurses, barbers, restaurants owners and others to obtain professional licenses. Hunters and anglers also need licenses and permits from the state. However, some state agencies, notably the State Liquor Authority (SLA) and the State Education Department (SED), have large backlogs for permits they issue which hinders the ability of a business to operate or a professional’s ability to work.

The bill passed today would help provide applicants with some expectation of how long they would have to wait for permit processing and if a wait is beyond an average delay, enables an applicant to obtain a refund of the application fee.

The Honesty in Permit Processing Act was also a component of the Senate Majority’s 2012 New Jobs-NY Job Creation Plan that is part of the Senate budget passed yesterday. The Plan includes significant tax relief to encourage the creation of new private sector jobs, measures to ensure fiscal responsibility and control state spending, as well as other reforms and incentives to make New York more economically competitive included several initiatives including. Specifics about the New Jobs-NY plan can be found on the Senate’s website at www.nysenate.gov.

The "Honesty in Permit Processing Act" would:

- require state agencies to annually report to the public on the time periods for processing applications of each type of permit, license, registration and certification;
- require the report to be submitted to the governor and the legislature, and made available

to the public on the agency internet homepage;

- require permit processing information to be printed on the cover page of each permit application;

- require all permit applications to be processed within a time period equal to 134 percent of the average processing time during the previous calendar year;

- require agencies that fail to complete processing within that average period of time to refund the application fees to the applicant.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.