

SENATE COMMUNITY AND URBAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 964

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 27, 2022

The Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 964.

This bill, as amended, permits the conversion of municipal court fines against an owner of real property for a housing or zoning violation into a municipal lien against the property cited in the offense if the fine remains unpaid 10 days after the expiration of the time period allowed for the owner to respond to the violation. The bill provides that a fine is not to be filed as a lien if the owner is making payments toward satisfaction of the fine under an approved installment plan. Prior to converting an unpaid fine into a municipal lien, the municipality is to be required to notify a property owner that the unpaid fine will be converted into a lien and to provide the property owner with an opportunity to pay the fine or request a hearing. If the property owner fails to respond in accordance with the notice, the code enforcement officer is to file a copy of the lien and certification with the municipal tax collector. The lien is to be added to and become and form part of the taxes next to be assessed and levied upon such dwelling or lands, the same to bear interest at the same rate as taxes, and is to be collected and enforced by the same officers and in the same manner as taxes.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to specify that property maintenance code violation fines are not allowed to be filed as a municipal lien, but allows filings for housing code violation fines. The committee also amended the bill to permit a property owner to respond to the violation by seeking a hearing instead of making an appeal. Lastly, the committee amended the bill to provide that a fine is not to be filed as a lien if the property owner is making payments toward the fine under an approved installment plan.