ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 4135
(First Reprint)

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 4135 (First Reprint) without my approval.

This bill would make it easier for government entities to issue parking tickets by authorizing the use of digital parking meters or other electronic parking compliance devices to monitor parking compliance within their jurisdictions. Because digital parking meters increase the efficiency of parking enforcement, I am concerned that the proliferation of these meters would dramatically increase the number of parking tickets issued across the State, which, in turn, would increase the amount of fines paid by New Jersey residents.

This concern is not merely theoretical. In 2016, Palisades Park installed twenty digital parking meters as part of a pilot program. Those twenty digital meters averaged about 125 violations each, compared to an average of 40 tickets among non-program meters. The pilot program led to a 190 percent increase in parking tickets in a five-month period, and in the first year, revenue rose to about $200,000 – about $50,000 more than the year before the meter overhaul.

Stated plainly, digital parking meters have been proven to generate huge increases in the number of parking tickets, and thus more money for local governments. If we are going to seek additional revenue to support important public priorities, I firmly believe that we should first ask those at the very top, such as those with incomes in excess of $1 million, to pay their fair share. I do not believe it is appropriate to protect the tax breaks enjoyed by the wealthiest New Jerseyans while extracting additional money from low-

and middle-income New Jerseyans, many of whom are struggling to make ends meet. I will not allow technological advances to multiply the likelihood of an unexpected parking ticket, which can devastate a resident or family living paycheck to paycheck.

Even if one disagrees and believes now is the time to dramatically ramp up parking enforcement, other jurisdictions have faced issues with the reliability of the technology used by digital parking meters. In Sacramento, California, which has utilized digital parking meters for several years, an audit released earlier this year found that despite protections like those in this bill, the meters issued more than 4,000 parking tickets by mistake. The mistakenly issued tickets stemmed from multiple problems including problems recording payment through parking-meter mobile applications, which failed to reach the meters in 20 percent of instances, and battery issues with the meters. Most significantly, the audit found that the digital parking meter sensors were not recognizing vehicles when they parked and were registering that vehicles had left their spots when they had not. In fact, the sensors were only able to correctly identify the presence of a vehicle in 84 percent of instances, meaning they were wrong 16 percent of the time. These problems are far too glaring to ignore, and should offer a cautionary tale on the expansion of these devices in New Jersey.

Moreover, relying on the notifications provided by mobile applications as a motorist-protection measure would disadvantage motorists who do not have smartphones, which usually include low-income and elderly New Jerseyans. Digital parking meters thus may result in the disproportionate issuance of parking tickets to low-income and elderly motorists, who are already particularly vulnerable to financial hardship.

As Governor, I am committed to making New Jersey a state in

which all residents can both afford to live and maximize their talents and abilities. I believe that the use of digital parking meters and the likely flood of parking tickets that would result will make New Jersey less affordable.

Accordingly, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 4135 (First Reprint) without my approval.

Respectfully,

[seal]

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Matthew J. Platkin

Chief Counsel to the Governor