

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 51

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO

District 20 (Union)

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District 2 (Atlantic)

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SYNOPSIS

Encourages accessible beaches for people with disabilities.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** encouraging coastal municipalities to
2 adopt practices to make beaches more accessible for people with
3 disabilities.
4
5 **WHEREAS**, The State of New Jersey's world-renowned beaches draw
6 millions of people every year, and the State is committed to
7 ensuring that all residents and visitors have access to New Jersey's
8 natural beauty; and
9 **WHEREAS**, For people with disabilities, beach recreation can present
10 unique challenges, as sand and water can be particularly difficult
11 for people with mobility impairments to navigate; and
12 **WHEREAS**, In response to this problem, New Jersey's municipalities
13 have invested in programs and resources that better accommodate
14 people with disabilities and ensure that every visitor has access to
15 the beaches of this State; and
16 **WHEREAS**, Public surf chairs which provide an easy way to navigate
17 both the sand and the ocean, accessibility mats which allow people
18 with mobility limitations to bring a wheelchair close to the water,
19 and designated parking spaces all provide ways for people with
20 disabilities to enjoy New Jersey's beaches and boardwalks; and
21 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's municipalities have been at the forefront of
22 adopting practices that make beaches a more welcoming place for
23 people with disabilities; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Every coastal county in New Jersey and many individual
25 municipalities have published accessible beach guides so that
26 people with disabilities can better plan their visits by knowing
27 which access points have disability resources; and
28 **WHEREAS**, It is not only a moral responsibility to provide access to
29 one of the State's most iconic resources to people with disabilities,
30 but it is also a way to encourage people with disabilities and their
31 families to spend time at the New Jersey Shore; and
32 **WHEREAS**, Many initiatives to encourage beach accessibility started at
33 the municipal level, and the New Jersey Assembly supports and
34 recognizes the continued efforts to provide recreation for citizens
35 with disabilities; and
36 **WHEREAS**, It is fitting and proper for this House to recognize the
37 efforts of New Jersey's coastal municipalities to make this State
38 more welcoming for people with disabilities, and encourages
39 municipalities to continue to seek ways to improve beach access;
40 now, therefore,
41
42 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*
43
44 1. This House encourages coastal municipalities to continue to
45 invest in programs that make their beaches accessible to people
46 with disabilities.

2. This House encourages coastal municipalities to reach the goal of providing accessible resources at 25 percent of their beaches by 2020.

3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

STATEMENT

This resolution recognizes the efforts of New Jersey's coastal municipalities to improve beach resources for people with disabilities, encourages municipalities to continue to make their beaches accessible for all visitors, and encourages municipalities to provide accessible resources at 25 percent of their beaches by 2020.

Every year, New Jersey’s world-class beaches draw millions of visitors from across the country. Beach recreation provides the opportunity for people from all backgrounds to enjoy New Jersey’s natural beauty, however, beaches present unique challenges for people with disabilities. It is difficult to navigate sand and water with a mobility impairment, and some beaches do not offer accessible resources for people who require accommodations. This can make beaches an unwelcoming place for people with disabilities, when the State’s most iconic natural feature should be open and available to every visitor.

New Jersey's municipalities have many different resources available to assist people with disabilities visiting the shoreline. Many municipal beaches offer public surf chairs to people with mobility impairments, which are similar to wheelchairs, but have large inflatable tires and a PVC frame to navigate both sand and water. Municipalities have also expanded their accessible parking spaces and have installed accessibility mats which sit on top of the sand and allow people using wheel chairs to approach the water. Additionally, every county on the Atlantic Coast has released an accessibility guide so that people with disabilities will know beforehand where to find the resources they may need. These measures demonstrate New Jersey's commitment to accessibility and ensure that people with disabilities and their families are encouraged to visit New Jersey's beaches.

The majority of the initiatives to make New Jersey's beaches more open have started at the municipal level, and the Assembly wishes to commend this effort. The New Jersey Assembly is proud to have so many resources for people with disabilities and encourages municipalities along the entire coast to continue their work to make beaches a welcoming place for every visitor.