

**GOVERNOR'S STATEMENT UPON SIGNING
ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 4918**

Today, I am signing Assembly Bill No. 4918 into law, requiring the Secretary of State to designate a Major Event Coordinator for all major events held in the State. New Jersey is home to world-class sporting and entertainment venues, and I strongly support promoting and establishing the State as a destination for premier events. Because of a possible ambiguity in the bill's text, I am submitting this statement to express my understanding of the bill's requirements.

Under the bill, the designated Major Event Coordinator is required to assist organizers hosting major events with permits, licensing, and compliance with State laws, rules and regulations. The bill defines "major event" to mean and include events "that increase tourism to the State of New Jersey and generate significant, immediate or long-term economic, social and cultural benefits to the State, attract significant numbers of participants and spectators, or have a national profile outside of the region in which it is being run, and generate significant media coverage in markets of interest for tourism."

The ambiguity arises as to whether the requirement that the event "generate significant media coverage in markets of interest for tourism" applies to events that meet any of the three initial criteria, or only those events that meet the last criterion of "hav[ing] a national profile outside of the region in which it is being run". Because of the existence of the comma between "run" and "and", I believe the best interpretation based on the plain text would define "major event" as an event that both 1) meets any of the three initial criteria and 2) additionally "generate[s] significant media coverage in markets of interest for tourism."

An alternative definition that only applies the media coverage requirement to events satisfying the third criterion would considerably expand the universe of "major events". There are numerous events that increase tourism or attract significant numbers of spectators but fail to generate significant media coverage. Requiring a Major Event Coordinator for all of these events could require him or her to know the unique permitting and licensing requirements for all 21 counties and 565 municipalities to assist organizers - a responsibility too burdensome for one individual to effectively handle.

The narrower reading, which I believe to be better supported by the plain text, substantially limits the number of events to which the bill would apply and consequently would not require the creation of a new office to track and provide various jurisdictions' licensing, permitting, and event rules. Rather, the Department could designate an existing employee to be the Major Event Coordinator, as intended, and have him or her work with major event organizers on an as-needed basis.

I believe this interpretation accomplishes the sponsors' goal of furthering New Jersey tourism in a reasonable and achievable way. I thank them for their efforts to contribute to a stronger New Jersey economy, and am pleased to be able to sign this bill into law.

Date: July 23, 2019

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Matthew J. Platkin

Chief Counsel to the Governor