

Bill in New Jersey Assembly Could Allow Single-Stair Exit Stairwell in 4-5 Story Residential Buildings

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Source: Saiber Real Estate & Land Use Alert

A Bill first introduced by the New Jersey Assembly Housing Committee in October, and recently approved by the Committee to be considered by the full Assembly for a vote, could potentially permit single exit stairwells in certain new residential buildings under the State Uniform Construction Code. The new Bill would expand the scope of construction possibilities for residential buildings under six stories.

Assembly Bill No. 4972, which was introduced by Assemblyman Clinton Calabrese, would permit for municipalities to adopt an ordinance to allow a single exit stairway to serve a residential building of less than six stories for a Group R-2 occupancy. Under the current law, Group R-2 occupancy requires residential buildings over three stories to have at least two exits. This would allow for four and five story residential buildings, more commonly seen throughout Europe and other parts of the world, to become more commonplace in New Jersey.

The Bill further specifies that the first floor of such a structure may be used for a purpose other than residential use, provided that use is classified by the Commissioner of Community Affairs as a nonhazardous occupancy and served by entrances that are separate from those serving the residential floors.

While the Bill still has a long way to go before becoming law, this signals one of the first steps towards reform of the state's zoning and permitting laws, recently highlighted by Gov. Murphy during his [State of the State address](#).

If you have any questions about the above alert, please contact Justin Calta of Saiber LLC's Real Estate and Land Use, Zoning & Planning practice groups.