

## Clinton Twp. mayor leads housing fight

### Lawsuit by 20 towns targets 'inconsistencies'

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As Clinton Township prepares to advance its plan for meeting affordable housing obligations, its mayor is also moving forward with litigation on what he says are "inconsistencies" in the state's housing rules.

"We are not fighting building affordable housing," Mayor Nicholas Corcodilos said. "We are fighting inconsistencies in (the state) COAH's (Council on Affordable Housing) rules."

The "we" Corcodilos is referring to is the 20-town coalition he is leading, primarily out of Somerset and Hunterdon counties, in its lawsuit against COAH, contending the state council has ignored state law and court rulings in imposing unrealistic requirements for more housing.

At the same time, he said two petitions are being circulated asking Gov. Jon Corzine to extend a deadline for complying with the latest amendments to COAH rules. Instead of complying with those requirements by the end of the year, he said the petitions ask for a year's extension. One of the two petitions is being signed by public officials; the other by the general public.

"The two-month deadline is unacceptable and irresponsible," he said. "We need a year."

Corcodilos said he also has directed township attorneys to ask the state Attorney General's Office for guidance on how to handle a situation he describes as "untenable" -- with the township being asked to comply with COAH rules that appear to contradict policies of the state Department of Environmental Protection and Highlands Council, the agency seeking to preserve a 1,250-square-mile swath of land that provides water to more than half the state's population.

"Clinton Township does not want to find itself in a position of violating New Jersey statutes," he said. "We are between a rock and a hard place."

While those initiatives are in play, the township also is advancing a plan to build 85 units of affordable housing on 10 acres off Old Allerton Road.