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## **- News Release -**

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Christie Administration Announces Federal Approval of Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health State Plan**

**TRENTON, N.J., Feb. 12, 2016** – The Christie Administration today announced the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) approval of the New Jersey State Plan for State and Local Government Employees, certifying that the state meets all federal requirements for ensuring the safety and health of public workers.

“This is a major milestone for New Jersey public employees, as well as the development of the state’s occupational safety and health program,” said U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. “We applaud them for their ongoing commitment to protecting the safety and health of government workers who support the vital services that make New Jersey a viable place to live and work.”

“Our department is committed to safeguarding public workers and worksites,” said Commissioner Harold J. Wirths of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. “The certification of our state plan by OSHA ensures that New Jersey will remain at the forefront of protecting state and local government employees.”

New Jersey Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) is responsible for enforcing safety and health standards for more than 530,000 state and local government employees. The state Department of Labor and Workforce Development is responsible for

investigating complaints regarding safety issues, while the state Department of Health investigates health hazards in the workplace, such as chemical exposures, and ensures adequate personal protective equipment.

“Health and safety go hand-in-hand as we work to ensure the worksite environment supports employees leading productive lives,” said Acting Health Commissioner Cathleen Bennett. “This federal recognition underscores our efforts to maintain hazard-free workplaces that foster healthy environments.”

States and territories may establish plans that cover only state and local government employees—workers who are excluded from federal coverage. New Jersey is one of only six states—along with Maine, Illinois, Connecticut, New York and the Virgin Islands—that administers safety and health programs for government employees. Private sector and federal government employees in New Jersey remain under federal OSHA jurisdiction.

New Jersey maintains some of the nation’s safest workplaces with a consistently lower injury and illness rate than the nation as a whole. The most recent statistics from 2014 show New Jersey’s safety record remains better than the national average. New Jersey had 101,200 work-related injury and illness cases in 2014, which is 2,200 fewer cases than in 2013. This number of cases has been declining each year—from 106,700 in 2012.

More information on the New Jersey Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health State Plan can be found [here](#).

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**Labor Commissioner Harold J. Wirths (center, black suit) recently congratulated members of the PEOSH Advisory Board on receiving final approval from federal OSHA of the New Jersey State Plan for State and Local Government Employees, certifying that the state meets all federal requirements for ensuring the safety and health of public workers.**