

FUSCALDO LAW GROUP LLC

Legal Alert

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New PA Bill Would Extend Timeframes for Municipal Review of Development Projects, Provide Guidelines for Virtual Municipal Meetings and Zoning Hearings During COVID-19 Disaster Emergency

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Proposed legislation (SB 841) was sent to [Governor Tom Wolf](#) today which, if signed, would extend the time period within which municipalities must review and make determinations on pending development projects during the COVID-19 disaster emergency. Under the legislation, statutory review periods would be tolled for the period beginning on the date the [Governor's March 6, 2020 Proclamation of Disaster Emergency](#) and ending on the date that is 30 days after the effective date of the law. The bill also lays out procedures and processes, including those for public notices and public participation, to enable municipalities to conduct virtual meeting and hearings during the pandemic. Applicants with pending development projects can request the municipality schedule a virtual meeting. The municipality has the discretion regarding whether to grant the request. Parties receiving actual notice of proposed virtual meetings or hearings concerning development proposals will be deemed to waive any right to challenge the propriety of the proceeding under open meetings laws or other laws that govern participation in a public meeting. Such language is essential for the ability of applicants to move projects forward with confidence that approvals would not be voidable solely because the proceeding occurred virtually rather than in-person. All of these changes are temporary, as the section of the law pertaining to local government meetings expires when the COVID-19 emergency ends. A copy of SB 841 can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions or would like more information on the issues discussed in this alert, please contact [Al Fuscaldo](#).

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