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## Gov. Corzine signs bills to boost N.J. renewable energy

by Lisa Fleisher and Danny Teigman/The Star-Ledger

Standing before a combined heat and power production facility at Rutgers University's Busch Campus, Gov. Jon Corzine signed a package of energy bills today designed to help wean New Jersey off fossil fuels and promote renewable energy development.

One bill allows renewable energy developers to install solar systems or wind turbines on industrial properties 20 acres or larger. A second requires developers to offer home buyers the option to install solar systems on new construction in developments with 25 or more units, including single family homes and condo buildings.

The governor said the bills further New Jersey's efforts to protect the environment and reduce dependence on foreign oil.

"A cleaner New Jersey means a better New Jersey, and an even more attractive place for people to live, work, run a business, and raise a family," Corzine said in a statement.

Senate Environment Committee chair Sen. Bob Smith (D-Middlesex) said developing clean energy sources will help on a number of levels, including global warming, energy sustainability, and reducing overall pollution.

"We should be doing everything in government to foster carbonless energy sources," said Smith, sponsor of the industrial site bill.

**Though the package passed in March with comfortable margins, Assembly Republicans called both pieces of legislation an intrusion on private or municipal rule.**

"I just don't believe the state should be using a broad brush approach to locating these wind turbines in all industrial zones," Assemblyman Vincent Polistina (R-Atlantic) said. "Municipalities should have the right to zone where they see fit."

**"Home buyers and home builders are smart people," said Assemblyman Jay Webber (R-Morris). "If they wanted to install solar energy or energy saving devices into their homes they could do that on their own without Trenton telling them to discuss the matter."**

But New Jersey wind turbine installer and site surveyor Roger Dixon, 60, called today's bill signing today a success.

"You have 566 municipalities in the state - you end up with 566 little fiefdoms," he said. "This legislation is taking the decision making process away from municipalities because they've proven inept at making those decisions and moving renewable energy forward."

Developers opposing the legislation said there were practical problems.

"You can't put solar on every single home," said Doug Fenichel, spokesman for K. Hovnanian Homes. "It would have to be positioned in a specific way."

Additional concerns centered on the aesthetics of wind turbines, which can be 60ft to 350 ft. tall with 25ft. to 250 ft. blade spans, depending on the generating power. The noise, risk to bats, birds and flying ice were also criticized.

Smith said another bill pending approval allows municipalities to impose "reasonable regulations" on any development as related to turbine height and minimum set back.

A third bill signed today by Corzine gives the Board of Public Utilities power to give grants for energy efficiency programs.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*