



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

KIMBERLEY HARRINGTON
Commissioner

November 24, 2017

Ms. Cece Peabody, Executive Director
New Jersey Turfgrass Association
25 US Highway 46 W
Wayne, NJ 07470-6801

Dear Ms. Peabody:

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is in receipt of your letter submitted on behalf of the New Jersey Turfgrass Association requesting a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of the 42nd Annual Green Expo Turf and Landscape Conference planned for December 5-7, 2017, in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12 requires that boards of education must ensure that all school district travel expenditures are "in compliance with state travel payment guidelines as established by the Department of the Treasury..." *N.J.A.C.* 6A:23A-7.11(b) and State Department of the Treasury *OMB Circular 16-11* Section X.B specifically prohibit reimbursement of in-state overnight travel. However, the circular and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:23A-7.11(c) authorize the Commissioner to grant overnight in-state travel waivers only in extremely limited circumstances, where the sponsoring organization can demonstrate that the conference is broad and multidisciplinary in scope, comprised of content-rich educational programming with important professional development opportunities and/or required training.

After carefully reviewing your submission, the NJDOE finds that the NJ Turfgrass Association's 42nd Annual Green Expo Turf and Landscape Conference planned for December 5- 7, 2017, does not meet the regulatory requirements for waiver approval summarized above. Of note, the conference does not offer attendees the opportunity to earn required Certified Educational Facilities Manager (CEFM) credits (*N.J.S.A.* 18A:17-50). For these reasons, the request to waive the prohibition on in-State travel reimbursement for attendance at this multi-day conference is denied.

It is important to note that denial of your waiver request does not mean that the New Jersey Turfgrass Association cannot hold multi-day conferences. Rather, the denial prohibits school districts, charter schools and renaissance school projects from reimbursing school board members and schools employees for overnight lodging in connection with your conferences. School districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects may not reimburse attendees for such overnight lodging, however, this does not prohibit school

Ms. Cece Peabody
Page 2
November 24, 2017

employees from attending the conference. Reimbursement for registration fees, mileage and meals, subject to the limitations and conditions set forth in *OMB Circular 16-11* and *OMB Circular 11-09*, may be permissible.

Finally, I want to emphasize that although the waiver request is denied, I recognize the important contribution the work performed by the New Jersey Turfgrass Association provides to New Jersey's public schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberley Harrington". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kimberley Harrington
Commissioner

c: Senior Staff
Executive County Superintendents