



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

CN-001
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Release:

Wednesday
Nov. 14, 1990

GOVERNOR FLORIO WANTS HARD LOOK AT SIZE OF STATE GOVERNMENT: 19 DEPARTMENTS MIGHT BE TOO MANY

MOUNT HOLLY -- In remarks prepared for delivery tonight, Governor Jim Florio today said he will begin looking at ways to reduce the number of state government departments, saying government needs to be accountable to people.

"Efficiency hasn't exactly been the state's motto for the past ten years. It's clear that people feel we can do a better, and quicker, job of bringing state government under control. We will." Governor Florio said, during the annual Tri-Club meeting of the Mount Holly Lions, Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs.

"Government can't be a far-flung affair. Government needs to be accountable to people. Right now, folks know they're not getting the government they pay for. And they're not shy about saying so."

Florio said he has directed Chief of Staff Joe Salema to review the possibility of reducing the number of state departments. The Governor said he wants a report from Salema by the end of the year so the results could be used in preparing next year's budget. Departments have already been directed to prepare budgets anticipating an 8 percent reduction in funding. There are currently 19 state departments.

The Governor pointed out that his Administration has already begun eliminating such unnecessary perks for state workers as rail passes and telephone credit cards, as well as cracking down on state cars. In addition, \$2 billion was cut from this year's budget and the audit team has already made a number of recommendations which would produce up to \$62 million in savings with a final report due by the end of the year.

Florio said, "Although the budget I submitted this year actually was smaller than the previous year, it's clear we can make more cuts."

Florio noted that while government must be made more efficient, it must also remain a catalyst for growth by investing in public works projects and economic development to create jobs and spur economic growth.

"If we're not lean and responsive, government won't be the engine that helps drive our economy and create jobs," Governor Florio said. "Government has to have the courage to step in where it's needed in building new roads, better schools, high-tech airports and ports. The kinds of things necessary if our state is to keep up in the world marketplace."

The following are excerpts from the Governor's remarks:

- Although the budget I submitted this year actually was smaller than the previous year, it's clear we can make more cuts. No, people don't want important services cut -- but they think we can do better.

People read in the papers about giant corporations making moves to tighten up and they say, "Why can't government do the same?"

I'm comfortable with that message. We've been saying and doing that since I took office.

- And while some people protest spending cuts, other people come to protest spending more on anything. They're all part of the process, all part of the debate. We all have to work together to decide where we want to go, and how we want to get there. I'd like your help, too.
- Over the past decade, there was none of the necessary pruning of state government. And, as anyone who does any gardening knows, the most productive gardens are trimmed and directed in their growth. From time to time, you have to step back and take a look at what you've got.
- It may be that some state workers will lose their jobs as we cut back state government. On a personal level, that shouldn't make anyone happy. But, we all have to see what's so clear to so many people: state government must and can get by with less.