NOTICE TO THE BAR

VIRTUAL GRAND JURY PILOT PROGRAM – EXPANSION TO STATE GRAND JURY

The Supreme Court by Orders dated May 14, 2020 and June 4, 2020 authorized a pilot program for virtual grand jury sessions, starting in Bergen and Mercer Counties. By Order dated June 9, 2020, the Court expanded that pilot program to also permit selection (empanelment) of grand juries in a virtual format.

In both pilot counties, matters have been presented and indictments returned. Based on the results in the two pilot counties, the Division of Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and Public Safety expressed interest in conducting State Grand Jury proceedings in a virtual format. Accordingly, the Court has authorized the expansion of the virtual grand jury pilot program to enable existing State Grand Jury panels to reconvene in a virtual format.

Technology funded by the Attorney General and configured and administered by the Judiciary will be supplied to State grand jurors where necessary to enable participation in the virtual grand jury proceeding.

The Court's June 25, 2020 Order is attached.

Glenn A. Grant by SDB

Hon. Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.
Acting Administrative Director of the Courts

Dated: June 25, 2020

SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

The Supreme Court by Orders dated May 14, 2020 and June 4, 2020 authorized a pilot program for virtual (video) grand jury proceedings, as recommended by the Supreme Court Working Group on Remote Grand Jury Operations (Working Group). The Court by Order dated June 9, 2020 expanded the pilot program to permit virtual grand jury selections.

The Court in the May 14, 2020 Order authorized county grand juries that had been selected pre-COVID-19 to reconvene in a virtual format in Bergen and Mercer Counties, with the results of those virtual proceedings to be considered in determining whether and how to expand remote grand jury operations. In both pilot counties, matters have been presented and indictments returned.

Based on the results in the two pilot counties, the Division of Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and Public Safety has expressed interest in conducting State Grand Jury proceedings in a virtual format.

Accordingly, it is ORDERED that effective immediately, for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency or until further order:

1. The virtual grand jury pilot program is expanded to include State Grand Jury proceedings in addition to ongoing county grand jury virtual proceedings in Bergen and Mercer Counties.

2. Pursuant to N.J. Const., Art. VI, sec. 2, par. 3, until further order, Rule 3:6-11 ("Impanelment and judicial supervision of state grand jury") of the Rules Governing the Courts of the State of New Jersey is relaxed and supplemented to the extent necessary for operation of the virtual grand jury pilot program.
3. Virtual State Grand Jury proceedings shall be conducted consistent with the provisions of the Court's May 14, 2020 and June 4, 2020 Orders.

For the Court

Chief Justice

Dated: June 25, 2020