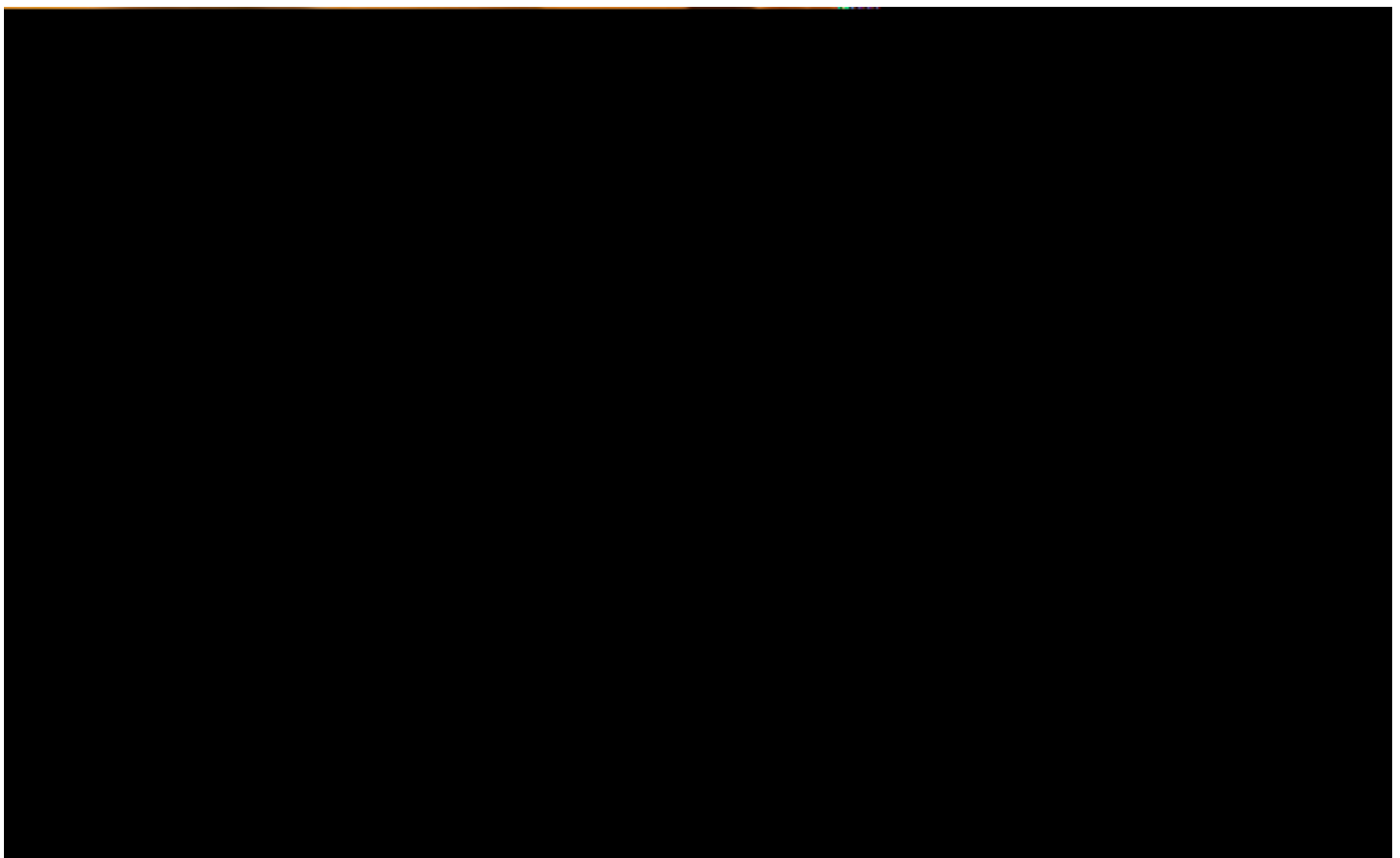


By Carl Golden | July 5, 2023, 12:02 am | **Columnist** (<https://www.insidernj.com/category/columnist/>), **News** (<https://www.insidernj.com/category/news/>)



The fiscal 2024 state budget signed by Gov. Phil Murphy established two records: first, at \$54.3 billion, it is the largest in state history (<https://www.insidernj.com/home-opinion-the-who-er-nj-assembly-approves-54-3-billion-budget/>), and second, for the level of embarrassment the Legislature brought on itself and the environment of governmental dysfunction created in the process.

Despite having the governor's budget recommendation in hand for our months, it came down to a chaotic last-minute scramble (<https://www.njsofthnews.org/video/legislature-approves-history-54-3-billion-budget/>) to secure committee approval, even though the proposed budget wasn't available, and to

He said that (http://www.nydaily.com/murphy-says-the-2024-budget) it will take more than three hours before the constitutionally mandated July 1 deadline for a budget to be in place and head off a government shutdown.

It was left to budget committee chairman

acknowledging the chaos and suggesting the Legislature should consider a "modernization" of the process to instill greater order and procedural transparency to move forward.

His suggestion notwithstanding, "modernization" of the system is not the issue in need of addressing. It is the abuse of the system that is.

Carl Golden is a senior contributing analyst with the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University.