

toll booth.

At the close of evidence, the Robertses moved for a directed verdict on the grounds that Cadec conceded that it could have designed the X-300 more safely by requiring the truck to be stationary when the driver enters information. The trial court denied the motion, finding that, because such a change would diminish the usefulness of the X-300, it would implicate the risk/utility analysis of the computer.

The trial court charged the jury that it was plaintiffs' burden to prove that the computer was defective because it was not reasonably safe for its intended or reasonably foreseeable use. To meet that burden, plaintiffs would have to prove that the computer's risks outweighed its utility. The trial court then instructed the jury to employ a risk/utility analysis for the purposes of determining whether the Cadec computer was defectively designed. Over the Robertses' objection, the court went on to instruct the jury on the section 3a(2) defense, but not on that section's two statutory exceptions.

The jury found that the computer was not defective and returned a verdict of no cause of action. The trial court then denied the Robertses' motion for a new trial or, in the alternative, for a judgment n.o.v. Only Anita Roberts appealed, claiming that the charge on the section 3a(2) defense was reversible error because the two exceptions-workplace equipment and feasible elimination of the danger without impairing usefulness-made the defense unavailable to Cadec.

In an unpublished opinion, the Appellate Division reversed and remanded for a new trial. Because Cadec "acknowledged that it was technologically and economically feasible to have designed the computer to require the truck to be stationary in order to operate the computer," the Appellate Division held that "[t]he judge should not have charged this statute because it was undisputed that the dangers posed by this computer could have 'feasibly be[en]

eliminated without impairing the usefulness of the product.' " (quoting *N.J.S.A. 2A:58C-3a(2)*).

The Appellate Division found "driver convenience" and "greater precision in recording" insufficient to justify the unsafe character of the X-300. The court held that, because the second statutory exception of section 3a(2) applied, the section 3a(2) defense was not available to Cadec. Therefore, the Appellate Division concluded that the trial court should have given an instruction on only risk/utility analysis, and not on the section 3a(2) defense. The Appellate Division remanded the case for a new trial on Roberts's third-party complaint against Cadec.

We granted Cadec's petition for certification, 137 *N.J. 314*, 645 A.2d 142 (1994).

II

In construing a statute, "[t]he primary task for the Court is to 'effectuate the legislative intent in light of the language used and the objects sought to be achieved.' " *Merin v. Maglaki*, 126 *N.J. 430*, 435, 599 A.2d 1256 (1992) (quoting *State v. Maguire*, 84 *N.J. 508*, 514, 423 A.2d 294 (1980) (footnote omitted)). In enacting the Act, the Legislature emphasized the importance of ascertaining its intent by providing in the Act itself that "such sponsors' or committee statements that may be adopted or included in the legislative history ... shall be consulted in the interpretation and construction of this act." *N.J.S.A. 2A:58C-1a*.

Hence, we approach our interpretation of section 3a(2) mindful of the Legislature's policy to limit the liability of manufacturers so as to " 'balance[] the interests of the public and the individual with a view towards economic reality.' " *Shackil v. Lederle Labs.*, 116 *N.J. 155*, 188, 561 A.2d 511 (1989) (quoting *Shackil v. Lederle Labs.*, 219 *N.J.Super.* 601, 643, 530 A.2d 1287 (1987) (Shebell, J.A.D., dissenting), *rev'd*, 116 *N.J. 155*, 561 A.2d 511 (1989)). See also *DePrimo v. Lehn & Fink Prods. Co.*, 223 *N.J.Super.* 265, 273, 538 A.2d