

Township of Delanco
770 Coopertown Road
Delanco, NJ 08075

August 20, 2008

Governor Jon Corzine
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Corzine,

I am asking that you reject the 2007 Amendment to the 1998 Management Rights Agreement (94-0097) to the Palmyra Cove site between the NJDEP, the NJDEP Tidelands Resources Council, Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the Burlington County Bridge Commission. This new thirty year agreement was negotiated without participation from the citizens of any of the New Jersey communities along the Delaware River who will be adversely impacted by the new terms of the proposed 2007 Amendment to the 1998 Management Rights Agreement.

The 2007 Amendment revising the 1998 Agreement before you, approved by the Tidelands Resources Council on December 5, 2007, drastically reduces the available land at the Palmyra Cove site for deposit of dredged material from the Delaware River. Palmyra Cove is one of several areas used since 1900 for deposit of dredged material to establish and maintain the navigation shipping channel in the lower reach of the Delaware River. The significant loss of land for dredge spoils as represented in the Amendment puts great pressure on other sites, sites last used decades ago. At a meeting of community leaders with NJDEP in April 2008, the Office of Dredging & Sediment Technology (ODST) outlined their plans for future Delaware River dredging. A new component of NJDEP /ODST Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) stipulates that dredge sites in the future would be used continuously as materials mining operations by private contractors. This policy shifts the use of dredge sites from sporadic use every twenty or thirty years, to continuous, daily, heavy industrial usage which would entail dozens of daily transits by 80,000 pound dump trucks transporting dredged and mined material. Many dormant dredge sites are directly adjacent to newly dense residential neighborhoods of recent developments as well as existing neighborhoods whose narrow roads and weight limited bridges provide access to the river communities, but are not engineered for such heavy industrial use.

The meeting last April 2008 was the result of public inquiry from New Jersey riverfront communities on future Delaware River dredging plans based on previous experience of dredging activity. Limited information about the proposed 2007 Amendment regarding Palmyra Cove naturally led to suspicions that self-serving special interests acted to change the 1998 Management Rights Agreement, out of sight of the public, and alter the future use of the Palmyra Cove area at the expense of neighboring river communities, affecting approximately 80,000 taxpaying residents. It is disquieting when public agencies fail to comply with Open Public Records Act requests. In February 2008 both NJDEP and the Burlington County Bridge Commission failed to provide a copy of the 2007 Amendment. In June 2008 the NJDEP failed to respond to a second request for the 2007 Amendment.

Governor, your immediate intervention is required to reject the currently proposed Amendment to the existing 1998 Management Rights Agreement. The issue of Delaware River dredging is an important one that must be decided in the full light of day, through conversation with all of the stakeholders, and with opportunity for public comment from all of the people of New Jersey.

Sincerely,



Michael L Templeton
Deputy Mayor, Delanco Township