

In Her Own Words

Examples of Lack of Balance by Nancy Wittenberg

- On the role of insiders and lobbyists exploiting loopholes that gut environmental protections:

"The exemption process favors those who are able to follow the complexities of these things," she said. "If you have a lot of lawyers on staff, and people who understand the process and are familiar with it, that puts you in better position to make sure you can meet all of the requirements to make the exemption."

<http://www.gsenet.org/library/11gsn/2005/g050118.1.html>

- On protecting rivers that serve as drinking water sources:

"The Category One classification is intended for a very small population of waters," Wittenberg said. "In (state) rules it talks about parklands and it talks about shellfish waters or trout waters. What we're seeing now is a gross expansion of the use of this without justification."

<http://www.gsenet.org/library/11gsn/2003/g030224.8.html>

- On municipal stormwater controls to prevent flooding and protect water quality:

Wittenberg said she is concerned that the proposed rules go beyond environmental controls to issues of land use aimed at stopping development – [not] the state's water quality problems.

<http://www.gsenet.org/library/11gsn/2003/g030213.5.html>

- On "smart growth" and the viability of Newark redevelopment:

Nancy Wittenberg, environmental affairs director for the New Jersey Builders Association, said that she and others were suspicious that the new rules would simply choke off development.

"If smart growth would accommodate growth in places where people want to live, that would be smart," she said. "You can put it all in Newark, but frankly not a lot of people are going to move there unless something is done about other problems, like the schools."

<http://www.gsenet.org/library/11gsn/2003/g030103.2.html>

- On the performance of DEP in protecting the environment:

Nancy Wittenberg, director of environmental affairs for the New Jersey Builders Association, noted that the proposal doesn't guarantee the higher fees will go toward processing permits.

"They are losing stuff; they are dragging their feet," Wittenberg said. "Why are we going to give them more money to do a bad job?"

<http://www.gsenet.org/library/11gsn/2003/g030220.10.html>

- On protecting critical vernal pool habitat:

"These things are not easily identifiable," she said. "There are not flashing signs in the woods saying 'Vernal Pools, Vernal Pools'. And they're seasonal. If you have to wait for the right season, that has an impact on getting [building projects

<http://www.gsenet.org/library/11gsn/2002/g020514.6.html>

- On the pace of updating environmental regulations to reflect new laws and science:

"I would think this is grounds for New Jersey to slow down and I'm all for that," said Nancy Wittenberg, of the New Jersey Builders Association.

<http://www.gsenet.org/library/11gsn/2001/g010719.2.html>

- On implementing river cleanup plans required by the 1972 Clean Water Act:

The new standards "mean sewage treatment plants will have to upgrade," said Bill Wolfe, the state Sierra Club's policy director. "It means farmers will have to manage their lands differently. It means developers in certain critical watersheds will have to be limited. It has a whole series of significant requirements."

The cleanups were originally required by the 1972 Clean Water but it took environmentalists' lawsuits in 1996 to get the state and federal government moving, he said.

Developers, however, see state regulators as duplicitous, not meek. The cleanup plans, so far, have been a fig-leaf for an anti-development political agenda, said Nancy Wittenberg, director of environmental policy at the state Builders Association.

"We have no problem with the process in theory," she said. "That's what these watershed groups should be doing - a serious look at what's in the water, what can be in the water, and how to control it. But that's not anywhere in their actual plans."

<http://www.gsenet.org/library/11gsn/2001/g010718.2.html>