

February 16, 2007

Lisa P. Jackson, Commissioner
Department of Environmental Protection
401 East State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Commissioner Jackson:

I understand that the Department is sponsoring a closed lobbyists meeting next Tuesday February 20 at 9:00 am in the State House concerning legislative and regulatory reforms to the Site Remediation Program. The Department apparently rather quickly invited certain "stakeholders" via a phone call just last week, followed up by a letter that was faxed. Invitees include lobbyists for the chemical industry, the Chamber of Commerce, and environmental groups.

Based upon this information, I just requested an opportunity to attend this meeting. I was advised that the meeting was closed, that attendees had already been approved by you, and that my request was denied at the Assistant Commissioner level.

It is totally inappropriate for a public agency to hold a "closed" "by invitation only" "stakeholder" meeting with lobbyists in the Statehouse. The lobbyist oriented nature of the meeting is ill advised, given the Department's numerous commitments to remedy a major flaw in the site remediation program, which is lack of effective public awareness and participation. This is especially problematic, coming at a time when the Governor is promoting transparent, accountable, and ethical government, and the Site Remediation Program is under close media, public, and legislative scrutiny in the wake of major regulatory oversights.

I strenuously object and ask that this "closed" lobbyist meeting be open to the public and the media to attend. A policy oriented meeting of this nature and magnitude should be public noticed and open to the public.

I respectfully await your response to this request.

Sincerely,

Bill Wolfe, Director
NJ PEER
609-397-8213

c: Senator Smith, Environment Committee Chair

Senator McNamara, Ranking minority member
Senator Lance (my home Senator)
Debbie Mans, Governor's Policy Office
Jeff Tittel, Sierra Club, NJ Chapter
Dave Pringle, NJ Environmental Federation