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Documents Released Today Prove Corzine's Deepening Deal Worthless – New Jersey will be Dumped on Again

Location, NJ – Federal documents released today reveal that the May 17, 2007 deal of Governors Corzine and Rendell to allow the Delaware Deepening project to move forward does not contain the key protections for New Jersey that Governor Corzine insisted it did.

“These documents prove that Governor Corzine’s secretly negotiated deal has accomplished nothing except to allow the Delaware River Deepening to move forward,” stated Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, who obtained the documents under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). “As we feared, the deal turned control of the River over to Pennsylvania and left New Jersey powerless to protect itself from the environmental and economic dangers of the Delaware River deepening.”

The Agreement between the two governors was to result in an updated environmental impact statement (EIS) for the project, all spoils going to Pennsylvania, and a committee to agree on the final plans for spoil disposal. The documents released today demonstrate that none of these three key elements of the agreement will happen. In addition, Pennsylvania is opposing New Jersey permitting authority over this and other projects involving the Delaware River.

“The Army Corps makes very clear in these documents that there will be no updated EIS and they still plan to dump most of the dredge spoils in New Jersey and the rest in Delaware with none going to Pennsylvania,” added Sharon Finlayson of the New Jersey Environmental Federation. “This makes the creation of a committee that is to agree upon the outcome for the spoils meaningless.”

As part of a September 20, 2007 response to the Delaware Riverkeeper Network’s June 15, 2007 FOIA request, the Army Corps sent:

- A March 13, 2007 email where the Army Corps states “The District position is that the EIS is sufficient and complete.”
- A May 31, 2007 email where the Army Corps refers to a dredged material placement plan that identifies the following New Jersey sites for dredge spoil disposal: Raccoon Island, site 15D, Site 15G and Pedricktown South, and Reedy Point South in Delaware. No plans for spoil disposal in Pennsylvania are identified or referenced.

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van Rossum was not surprised by the revelations: “When we learned of the back door deal making, we warned Governor Corzine not to be taken in by the false promises of Pennsylvania. Governor Corzine has sacrificed New Jersey’s environment, taxpayers, and communities for the benefit of Pennsylvania.”

“It is stunning that Pennsylvania would have the nerve to challenge New Jersey’s right to protect its coastal zone and natural resources when it has already applied for and received the same authority from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,” stated Tim Dillingham, Executive Director of the American Littoral Society. According to recent newspaper reports a number of Pennsylvania politicians, agencies and entities challenged New Jersey’s right to review and oppose federal projects that would impact the state’s coastal zone and water resources, including dredging projects.