



Corzine Dumps on the Delaware: Picks Pennsylvania Politics Over New Jersey Citizens and Environment

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Governor Corzine has succumbed to Pennsylvania demands that it be allowed to pursue the Delaware River deepening project despite its environmental threats and economic failings. Environmental organizations representing both sides of the River are opposing the impending Thursday announcement of an agreement negotiated between Governor's Corzine and Rendell whereby:

- Pennsylvania's PRPA will become the project sponsor;
- Pennsylvania will be asking the Army Corps of Engineers for an updated EIS to be issued within a 6 month period;
- NJ will retain whatever limited permitting authority it might hold for the project and will seek to release a permit decision on some kind of expedited basis;
- NJ makes no financial commitments to the project now or in the future;
- All of the spoils are to go to the State of Pennsylvania;
- A committee with reps from PA, NJ and DE will have to agree unanimously on the dredge spoil disposal plan for the project.

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Environmental organizations are opposing the deal struck between the two Governors and are calling for NJ State Legislators to hold hearings to investigate how the deal was struck and its impact on the environment, citizens, economy and ports of New Jersey.

According to the Delaware Riverkeeper, Maya van Rossum: “This deal moves New Jersey out of the driver’s seat where it could prevent this harmful project. We are now in the back seat, providing comments which will undoubtedly be ignored. Despite efforts to spin this agreement to make it seem protective of New Jersey, it comes down to a political deal allowing Pennsylvania to control the River, moving forward one of the most controversial and dangerous projects our communities face. Worse yet, it is the result of back room dealings which excluded the citizens and legislators of New Jersey.”

When asked “why the call for legislative hearings?” American Littoral Society Executive Director Tim Dillingham said “this project has been so wrapped up in misinformation and the agreement negotiating process so exclusive that the only way to make sure New Jersey is protected is to hold public hearings.”

“This project is not just about dredge spoils as project supporters like to claim – it is about protecting New Jersey’s drinking water, environment and jobs” says Jane Nogaki of the New Jersey Environmental Federation. Sharon Finlayson, Board Chair of NJEF, adds: “and it is about Governor Corzine’s commitment to protect our communities and environment in a way we can respect and trust, without back door deals and by putting the needs of other states first.”

Organizations from the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, American Littoral Society and New Jersey Environmental Federation and others opposed to the project will be present from 10 am on to hear and comment on the deal to be announced at the DRPA meeting now scheduled for Thursday morning, 10:30 am, at the DRPA headquarters located on One Port Center, 2 Riverside Drive, Camden, NJ.

Background on the project and the concerns of environmental organizations – both ecological and economic -- can be found in a report issued recently by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and the National Wildlife Federation at www.delawareriverkeeper.org.