

NEW JERSEY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
TASK FORCE

Chairs

Mr. Bradley M. Campbell
Commissioner
Department of
Environmental Protection

Mr. Fred Jacobs, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner
Department of Health and
Senior Services

Members

Ms. Jeanne Herb
Assistant Commissioner
Department of
Environmental Protection

Mr. James Blumenstock
Deputy Commissioner
Department of Health &
Senior Services

Mr. Lawrence Stanley
Assistant Attorney General
Department of Law & Public
Safety

Mr. Dennis Keck
Assistant Commissioner
Department of
Transportation

Ms. Maureen Hassett
Assistant Director
NJ Economic Development
Authority

Mr. Joseph Donald
Deputy Executive Director
Department of Community
Affairs

Ms. Monique Purcell
Director
Department of Agriculture

Mr. Dwight Pfennig
Chief of Staff
Department of Education

Mr. John Hart
Deputy Chief of Staff
Department of Human Services

Mr. David Corso
Director
Department of Education

**Environmental Justice
Task Force**
Office of the Commissioner,
NJDEP
PO Box 402
Trenton, NJ 08625

Statement of Findings
Linden, Union County
Tremley Point Petition
June 15, 2005

1. Introduction

On January 28, 2005 and February 24, 2005, the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) reviewed the September 22, 2004 Environmental Justice Petition (the EJ Petition) submitted by the Tremley Point Alliance accompanied by the signatures of 157 Residents and 19 Workers from Linden (the petitioners). The EJ Petition was submitted to the EJTF pursuant to Executive Order No. 96.

2. Background

Linden is 10.8 square miles in size and it has 27 major regulated sites, which equates to a density of approximately 18 times the state average (3.72 sites per 1,000 acres compared to 0.2). The members and supporters of the Tremley Point Alliance state in their petition that the residents of Linden have exhausted their resources fighting projects that other communities would not welcome, and that it is time that Linden residents no longer have to worry about toxic clouds and explosions, truck accidents spilling chemicals, infectious medical waste on the roadway, poor air quality, etc.

NJDEP's Environmental Justice Program staff visited the community which is the subject of this petition, i.e., the Tremley Point area of Linden on January 20, 2005, and met with the Petitioners regarding the issues raised in the EJ Petition.

3. Summary of the EJ Petition

The Petitioners have asked the EJTF to consider several issues of concern to the community. The main issues are summarized as follows:

- Performance of a health survey and air quality monitoring in Linden due to the high incidence of asthma and other respiratory illnesses identified in children and senior citizens.
- Protection of the wildlife that exists in pockets of habitat and foraging areas in the Seventh Ward by reclassifying the wetland in the area of Linden's Piles Creek and banks of the Rahway River as "exceptional wetlands".
- Prior to approval of any projects in the Seventh Ward, i.e., Tremley Point, that have a potential to impact human health and/or the environment, an Environmental Impact Study/Statement and meaningful public participation must be required.

4. Findings of the EJTF

The EJTF has carefully evaluated available information pertaining to the petitioners' claims and finds that the issues raised in the petition fall within the scope of Executive Order No. 96, and appear to be significant and deserving of further study by the EJTF. Therefore, the EJTF has determined to conditionally approve the petition submitted by the Tremley Point Alliance provided that the EJTF and the Tremley Point Alliance mutually agree to identify specific action items prior to developing the Environmental Justice Action Plan. In making this determination, the EJTF has considered the Environmental Justice Advisory Council's recommendation to further this petition. The EJTF will meet with the Tremley Point Alliance to determine the issues to be considered in the Environmental Justice Action Plan. The Action Plan will be limited to those elements that are feasible and for which there are resources available to the EJTF member agencies.