Closing Statement

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New Jersey State Commission of Investigation
Public Hearing
October 13, 2004

Thank you for your appearance and for your testimony here today.

That will conclude these proceedings. But before we officially adjourn, I have just a few closing observations.

First, on behalf of my colleagues on the Commission, my thanks to Deputy Director Charlotte Gaal and the entire SCI staff for the hard work and dedication that drove this unprecedented inquiry. I’d also like to express our gratitude to the many private citizens and public servants who offered their assistance in this long and difficult but entirely worthwhile process.

Ladies and gentlemen, the record is clear and convincing: The facts we have established in this process implicate issues that demand the attention of every responsible elected and public official in this state.
As I have said, we are encouraged by some of the pro-active and progressive steps taken to date by elements of both the industry and the regulatory community in response to our findings.

But we believe it has been demonstrated that more can, and must, be done.

In the coming weeks, the Commission will issue a report that will include a wide range of detailed recommendations for systemic reform in every area our extensive inquiry. I’ve said many times that this is not an academic exercise. We do not conduct investigations merely to compile an investigative record with a limited shelf life. Our job is to provide expert, fact-based guidance to New Jersey’s governmental leaders, providing the justification for reform to achieve a strong, practical and effective statutory and regulatory structure. The goal is to contribute to the creation of a system that truly serves the best interests of everyone who builds, buys and resides in new homes in New Jersey. They all have a stake in the quality and integrity of new-home construction and inspections.

Now is the time to meet this goal. Demand for new housing in New Jersey has never been greater, and this Commission has taken the lead in setting the stage for change. It is imperative that reforms and corrective actions be targeted where they can have the most beneficial impact – at those
institutions, entities and individuals who have the most direct, hands-on responsibility for actually constructing, and overseeing the construction of, homes of decent and acceptable quality. Home-buyers deserve nothing less.

Thus, the focus now must shift – from fact-finding to recommendations to action. And in that regard, we respectfully submit that the Governor and the Legislature have the power to place these vital issues front and center and to resolve them in the best interests of the citizens of New Jersey.

Thank you for your time and attention.

These hearings are adjourned.