
Public Hearing

before

SENATE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 61

(Proposes Constitutional Amendment to authorize use of dedicated Corporation Business Tax revenues for financing grants and loans for hazardous discharge cleanups)

LOCATION: Committee Room 10
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: May 15, 2003
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Henry P. McNamara, Co-Chair
Senator Joseph Suliga, Co-Chair



ALSO PRESENT:

Judith L. Horowitz
*Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aide*

John Hutchison
*Senate Republican
Committee Aide*

Kevil Duhon
*Senate Democratic
Committee Aide*

***Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Senate President John O. Bennett District 12	1
APPENDIX:	
Testimony submitted by Allen J. Magrini Vice President Hartz Mountain Industries, Inc.	1x
Memorandum submitted by Michael G. McGuinness Executive Director National Association of Industrial and Office Properties	4x
rs: 1-4	

SENATOR JOSEPH SULIGA (Co-Chair): We're going to reconvene this Senate Environment Committee.

Roll call.

MS. HOROWITZ (Committee Aide): Senator Suliga.

SENATOR SULIGA: Here.

MS. HOROWITZ: Senator McNamara.

SENATOR HENRY P. McNAMARA (Co-Chair): Here.

MS. HOROWITZ: And Senator Ciesla was here just a minute ago.

SENATOR SULIGA: He's here.

And Senator Lance, I believe, is still here.

MS. HOROWITZ: Yes.

SENATOR McNAMARA: Tried to call your cell phone to bring him up with you.

SENATOR SULIGA: Okay.

Senator.

We're very happy to have the Senate President here, to be the only person, I believe, to testify at this public hearing.

SENATE PRESIDENT JOHN O. BENNETT: Ever.
(laughter)

SENATOR SULIGA: We hope he keeps it short.

SENATOR BENNETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman --
both Mr. Chairmans.

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee on an issue that is vitally important to the future of our environment and our economy.

Will you please take those cell phones outside (referring to ringing cell phone). But please make sure you don't--

SENATOR SULIGA: Seriously, all kidding aside. Whose cell phone is that, please? Shut it off. If they're not here, shut it off.

SENATE PRESIDENT BENNETT: Don't hold it and drive either.

SENATOR SULIGA: Thank you.

SENATE PRESIDENT BENNETT: I will not presume to address the details of this legislation -- you, as members of the Committee of reference -- and especially Chairman McNamara and Chairman Suliga -- who have worked hard to address the many issues raised in the effort to clean up the environment and encourage economic vitality-- Rather, I'd like to suggest, should this Committee and the voters approve this amendment, what I believe the benefits that this legislation would provide for our residents.

As you know, New Jersey has a legacy, when it comes to environmental problems, as the most densely populated state in the nation, and one that relied on manufacturing for its growth during the early part of the last century. We have had to deal with the serious implications of that past.

While the problems were, and are, complicated and expensive to resolve, we as New Jerseyans have also built a legacy for an innovative and comprehensive approach to solving these problems. We have developed laws that stop the uninformed practices of the past, we have identified ways that the

power of the public sector can provide incentives to spur cleanup of the environment, and we have capitalized on the muscle of the private sector to attack not only the problems, but the solutions, as well.

This legislation is at the crossroads of both these approaches. By providing a new and reliable source of money for cleanups, we leverage the private sector's ability to identify economic opportunity in addressing sites of contamination. It also provides a significant boost to brownfields redevelopment, a policy priority of three successive administrations.

Finally, maintaining and enhancing the ability of the State to further respond to the need to more comprehensively address the problems still posed by the underground storage of certain hazardous substances, reminds us that this problem remains with us, and re-energizes our efforts. This is the right legislation for the right time.

And I appreciate the opportunity of being able to put that on the record. And I know that both of you have worked very hard in getting this bill and this package, that is being done, and being able to spread dollars that are sitting, not working for our cleanup -- to be able to go out and put them to work. And I'm sure that, given the opportunity, the voters are going to be very supportive of this Constitutional Amendment. I commend both of you for the hard work that you've done.

Thank you.

SENATOR McNAMARA: Thank you very much.

SENATOR SULIGA: Thank you, Mr. President.

Anyone else from the public? (no response)

Let it be on the record that no one else--

SENATOR McNAMARA: Allen, did you want to--

SENATOR SULIGA: Oh.

SENATOR McNAMARA: I don't know. Did he want to testify?

SENATOR SULIGA: No, I think--

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: No, I just wanted to be on record in support of the Constitutional Amendment.

SENATOR SULIGA: Anyone else? (no response)

This hearing is adjourned.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)