

THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2014 CONTACT: ALISE RODERER (609) 847-3700

SMITH AND SPENCER CALL ON CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION TO INVESTIGATE MISMANAGEMENT OF FENIMORE LANDFILL CLEANUP

Two environmental leaders in the New Jersey Legislature have called on Governor Christie to start an investigation into the handling of Fenimore landfill in Roxbury Township. In a letter to the Governor, Senate Environment and Energy Chairman Bob Smith and Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee Chairwoman L. Grace Spencer asked that the Attorney General investigate gross mismanagement of the cleanup of the landfill.

“A year ago, we heard horrific stories from members of the Roxbury community who were struggling with terrible odors and air quality that were impacting their families’ quality of life, and we took action, directing the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection on how best to clean up the landfill,” said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset. “Now we are hearing from Roxbury residents who say that the situation is being mismanaged by the DEP. We cannot allow the residents around the landfill to continue to suffer. Hopefully, the Governor will take action in investigating and correcting these issues.” “There is a litany of serious concerns and questions surrounding this landfill that demand answers,” said Assemblywoman Spencer, D-Essex. “Residents have been forced to endure these horrendous conditions for too long. They deserve to know that their state is advocating for their best interests and that moving forward their quality of life will come before any special interests.”

The letter outlined two areas of concern for the Legislators:

- The Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) plan to cap the landfill fails to take into account the DEP’s ability to provide long-term maintenance of the cap and emission from the equipment currently in place will create long-term environmental and health hazards for those in the area; and
- Lack of transparency from the DEP including how the area was designated as a brownfield, how Fenimore was approved to reopen in violation of state rules and regulations, how a former felon was permitted to operate the landfill, the decision to use the Fenimore landfill for Hurricane Sandy debris, the failure to keep the public adequately informed, and the refusal to provide soil samples of the area. In response to outcries from Roxbury Township community members, the Legislature, last June, passed legislation that would guide the DEP in cleaning up “legacy” landfills – or those closed prior to the state’s implementation of stringent landfill closing requirements.

The Fenimore landfill, which ceased operations in 1977, was purchased in 2010 by the Strategic Environmental Partnership LLC with the expressed plan to properly cap the dump and install a solar generation facility on its surface. The owners of the landfill began to accept new waste, but never built the solar facility. Residents in surrounding neighborhoods, which were developed during the three decades since the landfill was actively used, raised concerns of strong rotten egg smells, a scent associated with the release of hydrogen sulfide – a gas produced from the breakdown of waste material that can cause headaches, dizziness and upset stomachs at low concentrations and loss of consciousness and death at high concentrations.

The letter was sent to Governor Christie and copied to Acting Attorney General John Jay Hoffman, DEP Commissioner Bob Martin, Senate President Steve Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto, Members of the Senate and Assembly Environment Committees, Roxbury Township’s Mayor Jim Rilee and Roxbury Councilmembers.

Read the letter [here](#).