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SMITH-MCKEON CALL FOR CONTINUED ROLE OF D&R CANAL COMMISSION

Environment Committee Chairs Say Self-Funded Commission is "a model of good government."

TRENTON – In a letter to Governor Chris Christie and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin, Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, and John F. McKeon, D-Essex, today called for a continuation of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission.

The lawmakers – the chairs of the Senate Environment and Energy Committee and the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee, respectively – wrote that the Canal Commission is a model of good government that protects the water quality of the D&R Canal and surrounding area. They also noted in their letter that because the Canal Commission is self-funded through application fees, the work of the Commission is performed at no cost to the taxpayer.

"The developers who are regulated by this land use agency appreciate the role of the Canal Commission in protecting the Canal, which is a tremendous asset that developers routinely use in advertising their properties," wrote the legislators. "The regulated community also greatly appreciates the efficiency with which the Canal Commission processes their permit applications. Moreover, because any move to abolish the Canal Commission would likely not garner sufficient legislative support, there is a real danger that the regulated community would be left in administrative limbo with no agency statutorily authorized to process their permit applications."

Senator Smith and Assemblyman McKeon urged the immediate appointment of a new executive director to replace longtime executive director Ernie Hahn, who is retiring this month, and the hiring of staff to replace staff members who had left in recent months.

The letter also listed members of the Senate and Assembly environment committees who concurred with the sentiments expressed within the letter.

[Click here to read a copy of Senator Smith's and Assemblyman McKeon's letter.](#)