

NJBIA

AT ISSUE *By David Brogan, Vice President*

New Jersey's DEP Commissioner Becomes EPA Administrator

Lisa Jackson has left the building. On January 22, ex-NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Lisa Jackson was confirmed as President Barack Obama's Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. She is the first African American to hold that post. Replacing Jackson is Mark Mauriello, a veteran DEP employee. So as we have this changing of the guard, here's a look back at Jackson's accomplishments, and a look forward at what can be expected of Mauriello.

For Jackson, federal service is not new. She worked in the EPA for 16 years before coming to New Jersey, focusing on site remediation, and specifically the Superfund program.

Jackson joined DEP in 2002, and she became commissioner in 2006. In late 2008, she left the department and spent a short stretch as Governor Corzine's Chief of Staff.

NJBIA had a good working relationship with Jackson. While we certainly did not see eye-to-eye on many issues, she did make herself accessible and did listen to our concerns. One of the most positive steps she took was the establishment of the Permit Efficiency Review Task Force, which was charged with developing recommendations to make the permitting process quicker and more efficient. At first, the Task Force did not have a representative from industry. NJBIA asked her to provide us with the opportunity to participate and she agreed.

The Task Force's recommendations were released to facilitate permitting in August 2008, and we hope that they will be implemented over the next year.

Lisa Jackson truly earned her new title through years of on-the-job training in both state and federal environmental regulatory compliance. We wish her all the best in Washington, and hope that she doesn't become a stranger to New Jersey.

The learning curve for Mark Mauriello is not very steep either. He has worked for DEP in various capacities over 28 years. Mauriello served as the DEP's assistant commissioner for Land Use Management, where he was responsible for land use regulation, water supply, watershed management, and water monitoring and standards.

Mauriello recently staffed the Permit Efficiency Review Task Force for the department, and is probably most qualified to see those recommendations come to fruition. We have high hopes for meaningful reform in the way DEP processes permits.



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Because this is an election year, major policy shifts within the department are unlikely. But there are a number of issues still hanging out there that could be tackled by the new commissioner, including the state's Public Access rules, implementation of the Global Warming Response Act, better coordination with the Department of Community Affairs on implementation of the COAH (Council on Affordable Housing) regulations, and the much-needed overhaul of the Site Remediation Program and implementation of the Licensed Site Professional program. (See article on LSP, page 58)

Perhaps the biggest challenge for Mauriello will be the current economic climate. As New Jersey businesses cope with the recession, Mauriello will need to strike a balance between environmental protection and economic growth. That balance will be critical for the survival of many businesses in our state. In doing so, our overall environmental quality can be maintained and improved, and our state will still be able to grow and prosper. Let us hope. **NJB**