



*Contact:* Brian Aberback, Public Information Officer  
(201) 460-4619; (201) 615-8570 (cell)  
[brian.aberback@njmeadowlands.gov](mailto:brian.aberback@njmeadowlands.gov)

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## NJMC/NORTH BERGEN STATEMENT ON RAIL BILL VICTORY

**LYNDHURST, N.J.** – New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) Executive Director Robert Ceberio and North Bergen Mayor Nicholas Sacco issued the following statements in conjunction with press releases issued by the Governor’s Office and members of New Jersey’s federal delegation on Monday. The releases detail the state’s victory in an effort launched four years ago by the NJMC and North Bergen to protect residents, workers and the environment from railside waste transfer facilities operating without regulation.

The victory involves two parts and caps a battle that began in 2004, when the NJMC first tried to regulate what had become open-air dumps – with no safety or environmental protections – alongside the tracks in Hudson County. Five separate facilities were operating within a two-mile stretch of North Bergen.

First, the NJMC, with help from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Attorney General’s Office, reached a settlement with the operators of these five sites to meet state solid waste and local health and safety regulations. It also calls for the operators to pay \$1 million to the state and refund to North Bergen \$1 million held in escrow.

Second, Pres. Bush signed a law last week that extends similar protections to communities across the nation. The legislation, sponsored by Sens. Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez, (both D-NJ), and U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone, (D-Long Branch, 6th District), in the House, requires all railside waste facilities to follow local and state regulations. Operators had used an unclear federal law to claim they were exempt from this oversight.

“We cannot return to the dark ages of illegal dumping in the Meadowlands, when waste fires smoldered and unknown chemicals oozed into our fragile ecosystem. This is the 21st century, and all businesses need to operate in a safe, environmentally sound manner,” said Robert Ceberio, Executive Director of the NJMC. “The combined effort of everyone

from state Sen. Nick Sacco, the mayor of North Bergen, to Gov. Corzine and Sen. Lautenberg will go a long way toward protecting the Meadowlands as it continues to recover and grow.”

“Our focus from the start has been to work with the Meadowlands Commission to protect the safety of our residents and the environmental integrity of the region,” says North Bergen Mayor Nicholas J. Sacco. “To see these facilities now meeting DEP standards is an enormous step forward from where we were just a few years ago.”