



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Bill Perkins

## Public Hearing--Still "On the Waterfront": Corruption at Our Local Ports

BILL PERKINS September 30, 2009

| ISSUE: **AUTHORITIES AND COMMISSIONS, PANYNJ (PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY)**

| COMMITTEE: **CORPORATIONS, AUTHORITIES AND COMMISSIONS**

### PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

### NEW YORK STATE SENATE

#### Notice of Public Hearing

**Title: Still "On the Waterfront": Corruption at Our Local Ports**

**Subject:** In 1953 the Waterfront Commission was established as a bi-state entity. "Under statutory mandate, the mission of the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor is to investigate, deter, combat, and remedy criminal activity and influence in the Port of New York and New Jersey. The Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor also ensures fair hiring and employment practices, so the Port and region can grow and prosper." The impetus for this statute was years of criminal activity associated with the handling of waterborne

freight and hiring practices on the waterfront. The criminal activity was brought to light, in part, by the Pulitzer Prize-Winning articles entitled, "Crime on the Waterfront" by Malcolm Johnson in 1949 for the New York Sun. Each of the Governors from New York and New Jersey appoints a commissioner to jointly head the Commission.

**Purpose:** As described in an August 2009 report by the New York State Inspector General, Hon. Joseph Fisch, on May 7, 2007 the Inspector General was contacted by then-governor Eliot Spitzer regarding a complaint by an employee of the Waterfront Commission alleging misconduct by Waterfront officials. Additionally, the Inspector General received similar allegations from other sources. Both Governors Spitzer and David A. Paterson issued a series of executive orders directing the Inspector General to inspect the Waterfront Commission. The Inspector General, with cooperation of the New Jersey State Attorney General and Inspector General, began a comprehensive examination of the management of the Waterfront Commission. The Inspector General discovered that "the unique constitution of the Waterfront Commission as a bi-state entity had produced a climate of abuse and lack of accountability fueled by perceived immunity from oversight by outside entities." This hearing will examine what changes have been implemented as a result of the report and to assess what further changes must be made to the Waterfront Commission in order to ensure it carries out its intended duty as prescribed by its enacting statute. Additionally, the hearing will focus on S.5039. The purpose of this legislation is to give employers at the Port of New York and New Jersey (PONYNJ) the authority to control the size of the longshore workforce.

**Senate Standing Committee  
Corporations, Authorities and Commissions  
Senator Bill Perkins, Chair**

**Still “On the Waterfront”: Corruption at  
Our Local Ports**

**Location – 250 Broadway, 19th Floor  
Senate Public Hearing Room  
New York, New York 10007  
Monday, October 19, 2009 – 10:00 AM**

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