

February 22, 2010

Senator Jennifer A. Beck
12th District
NJ State Legislature
3rd Floor
Red Bank, NJ 07701

Declan O'Scanlon
Assemblyman 12th District
32 Monmouth Street
3rd Floor
Red Bank, NJ 07701

Caroline Casagrande
Assemblywoman 12th District
71 West Main Street
Suite 101
Freehold, NJ 07728

Re: **STATE LEGISLATORS FAIL TO ADVOCATE
FOR RED BANK AND THE 12TH DISTRICT**

Dear Senator Beck
Assemblyman O'Scanlon
Assemblywoman Casagrande:

It was with deep regret and disappointment that we read your letter of February 9th, 2010, which was printed in various local newspapers and which you also mailed to the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Red Bank. In that letter, you refuse to advocate for the residents of Red Bank with the newly-elected Governor to mitigate the hardship Red Bank is experiencing due to the high number of nonprofit and tax-exempt organizations in our Borough.

Extremely frightening is the fact that the sins of Trenton will be passed on to the residents of Red Bank who have already shouldered an enormous tax burden due to the failure of the State Government to live within its means for many, many years.

Red Bank has taken fiscally responsible, conservative, and proactive steps to live within its means and to reduce its debt. Our call to action is based on the \$2.3 billion of tax-exempt real estate in the Borough which amounts to 16.6% of all real property in Red Bank. Neighboring towns have much less tax-exempt property. For example, Fair Haven has tax-exempt property of 4.4%, Little Silver 5.4%, Middletown 10.2%, Shrewsbury Borough 5.1%, and Shrewsbury Township 1.8%. Red Bank is carrying its unfair share of not-for-profits, yet is obligated to provide services to these institutions. Your refusal to advocate at the State level on behalf of Red Bank residents - your constituents - is simply not acceptable!

The inference that Red Bank has failed to maintain its finances responsibly is completely lacking in merit and a total misunderstanding of the budget process in the Borough.

Last year, Red Bank's overall debt *decreased* by \$1.1 million. Operating expenses were *reduced* by \$100,000.00. Staff positions were eliminated and/or consolidated. Its labor force was *reduced* by over 5%. Red Bank took the lead on shared services, bringing in revenue by contracting with nearby municipalities and assisting them either in their construction code inspections, fire inspections, health department inspections, or animal control. In addition, Red Bank shares other services, positions, and equipment with surrounding municipalities and our Administrator functions not only in that capacity but also in 2 other positions he has handled for nearly 20 years.

You state that our 19 non-union Borough employees were undeserving of their nominal 1.5% recent pay raises which amounted to a total of approximately \$20,000. Our Borough employees wear many hats, do more with less, and get the job done. We have the best police department, public works department, volunteer firemen, and municipal employees in the State of New Jersey. Furthermore, appropriations are within cap and debt service is down \$100,000.00. Red Bank does not have a *spending problem*, it has a *revenue problem!*

We hope that you will reconsider your decision and advocate in Trenton for the residents of Red Bank. The Borough government has been a model of fiscal responsibility in these difficult economic times. We are counting on our State Legislators to stand up and fight for

Red Bank residents - your constituents - and to do more than provide lip service. It was once said, "If one is bold, great forces will come to your aid." Great forces are the residents of Red Bank who will come to your assistance if you advocate on their behalf with our new Governor. Each man, woman, and child residing in Red Bank deserves nothing less.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael R. DuPont 151

Councilman Michael R. DuPont
Chair, Finance Committee
Councilman Arthur V. Murphy, III
Councilwoman Sharon Lee
Councilwoman Kathy Horgan
Councilwoman Juanita Lewis
Councilman Edward Zipprich