



## SOUTH JERSEY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

*Leadership & Advocacy on environmental justice issues in South Jersey*

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### Conference Announcement: Crisis Caused by Building Schools On Contaminated Sites

The South Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance and other environmental and civil rights organizations in New Jersey will host the State's first conference to focus on the crisis caused by building schools on contaminated sites and the related issue of healthy schools.

We are also proud to announce that [Ms. Lois Gibbs](#) will be a featured guest speaker at the conference. Ms. Gibbs is nationally acclaimed for her groundbreaking work at Love Canal and is currently the Director of the [Center for Health, Environment and Justice](#).

The Conference will be held on **Saturday, May 3, 2008 at Thomas Edison State College, 101 West State Street, Trenton, NJ from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.** The Conference is free and open to the public. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

**New school construction and site remediation** are both critical issues that are targeted for reform and the subject of extensive debate and discussion. This conference will address issues at the intersection of these two very timely topics.

**Regarding school construction**, many informed observers believe an earlier state-funded program created pursuant to the *Abbott* decision largely failed to deliver on its promise to provide decent, safe, new schools to the communities in greatest need. One factor that contributed to what appeared to be multiple problems suffered by the program was a lack of clear criteria for school siting and site remediation that would ensure that newly constructed schools are environmentally safe. Now that plans to fund another school construction program are underway, state residents need to make sure the same mistakes are not repeated.

**Regarding site remediation**, severe problems with the state's site remediation program have been brought to light in recent years, resulting in renewed interest by the state legislature, the Department of Environmental Protection, and affected stakeholders to "fix" the way the program operates. These events provide a new opportunity to ensure that site remediation issues connected to the construction of new schools are adequately addressed. This is an opportunity we cannot afford to waste since our young children are especially vulnerable to the effects of pollution and must be protected. The conference will offer information on these issues and bring together interested members of the public and advocacy groups so they can create an action agenda to develop school siting criteria, site remediation standards for new school construction sites, and operational policies and practices that will ensure all of our children can attend school in a safe and clean environment.

- **Who should attend: Parents, EJ & Environmental Activists, School Administrators, Teachers, Staff, PTA, School Board Leaders, Concerned Community Members, and Students**

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#### For more information contact:

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