

State of New Jersey
Commission of Investigation



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SCI FINDS
PERSISTENT CRIMINAL INTRUSION
IN SOLID WASTE, RECYCLING

TRENTON – New Jersey’s commercial solid waste industry remains open to abuse and manipulation by criminal elements that circumvent the State’s regulatory and oversight system, the State Commission of Investigation concludes in a report issued today.

“Individuals banned from the industry here years ago because of ties to organized crime and other criminal activities have nonetheless found ways to conduct a lucrative commerce in waste-hauling and recycling,” the SCI report states. “New Jersey has also become a haven for criminally-tainted entrepreneurs who were kicked out of the business as a result of heightened vigilance and stronger rules elsewhere, most notably in neighboring New York.”

The report focuses heavily on longstanding statutory, administrative and funding weaknesses in New Jersey's A-901 program, established more than two decades ago in an effort to keep the industry clean. The SCI has reported on regulatory shortcomings in this realm on several prior occasions.

“That the Commission today must repeat some of the same general findings and recommendations is a testament to the price of warnings ignored, opportunities lost, and legislative intent undermined,” the report states. “It is also a testament to the guile and persistence of unqualified individuals who remain willing and able to subvert the system.”

The Commission recommends the A-901 program be substantially strengthened and that it be expanded to require – for the first time – scrutiny of individuals and entities engaged not only in garbage hauling but in recycling as well. “Of particular concern,” according to the report, “is the vulnerability to corruption of certain activities, such as the recycling and disposal of contaminated soil and demolition debris that pose serious potential environmental and public-health consequences.”

The Commission also recommends that authority over this enhanced regulatory structure be consolidated within the Office of the Attorney General, which cooperated fully with this inquiry and used it as a basis for a number of internal reform actions.

With regard to bolstering available resources, the SCI recommends that the Legislature and Governor consider a variety of self-funding mechanisms to provide adequate support for this critical oversight function without imposing an undue burden on the taxpayers.

“Since its inception, the A-901 program and related functions have rarely been allocated adequate funding or manpower, and ultimately that must change if New Jersey is serious about shielding this industry from unsavory elements,” the report states.



The State Commission of Investigation is an independent New Jersey watchdog agency established in 1968 to investigate organized crime and corruption, waste of tax money and other abuses of the public trust. Copies of reports are available at the Commission’s offices or via its Web site at www.state.nj.us/sci.