


Statement by
Jane M. Kenny, EPA Region 2 Administrator
on the
Ombudsman's World Trade Center Hearing
February 23, 2002

We are deeply distressed by the tone of the investigation by EPA Ombudsman Robert Martin into the health and environmental impacts of the World Trade Center attacks. From public statements, it seems that Mr. Martin has already reached his conclusions. We do not believe that today's hearing on this issue will be a forum for productive discussion of the public's genuine concerns and, therefore, have declined the invitation to attend. The hearing is clearly designed to get the headlines, not the facts.

EPA has already testified before U.S. Senate, New York State Assembly and New York City Council committees looking into the health and environmental impacts of the World Trade Center collapse. We have openly answered questions posed by numerous reporters and members of the public and posted our monitoring data on our Web site daily. Our extensive monitoring results and response efforts since September 11 are a matter of full public record. 

Administrator Whitman has asked our city, state and federal partners to work with EPA to address ongoing concerns about the safety of home and workplace environments through a Task Force on Indoor Air in Lower Manhattan. A working group from the relevant agencies has already held an informal meeting to jump-start this process. The task force will provide a real forum for evaluating the risks and responsibly explaining them to the public.

Residents of lower Manhattan need information and advice, based on sound science, not politically-motivated rhetoric. Today's hearing may be off-off Broadway, but it is still pure theater.