



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

April 22, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Christine Todd Whitman
Administrator, U.S. EPA

FROM: Robert J. Martin RJM
National Ombudsman

RE: Resignation from Service

I am writing to provide my resignation from government service as National Ombudsman of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response) effective 8:00 AM today, subject to a prospective ruling from the U.S. Office of Special Counsel or the federal courts. I have objected to your decision to dissolve the Ombudsman function as it relates to the hazardous waste and Superfund programs. I was disappointed that you would not meet last year at my invitation before your decision to end the Ombudsman function and was dismayed this year of your refusal to engage in settlement discussions to avoid continuing litigation on the matter.

I cannot recognize in principle and conscience, however, the seizure of my files and planned transfer to the Office of Inspector General where I will not continue to serve as an independent Ombudsman, but will merely answer a telephone. Moreover, your communication to the Inspector General to seize my files, change my locks, and transfer me immediately to the Office of Inspector General underscores the fact that the Inspector General has no actual independence if they proceed to act at your discretion.

I joined the United States Environmental Protection Agency over nine years ago under President George Bush as a career employee exceptionally qualified to be Ombudsman. I will now leave as Ombudsman with the joy and privilege of having been able to serve and empower the citizens of the United States in their communities.

Beyond the diligent achievement of cooperative solutions to environmental crises facing American communities, I also maintained that the Ombudsman must stand for truth, justice and democracy. I hope you find it in yourself to recognize that by obliterating the independent Ombudsman function, you have deprived the American people and the Congress of a valuable means with to keep the EPA true to its mission of protecting human health and the environment and to be accountable to American communities. It was wrong of you to unilaterally decide this matter while ignoring the pleas of dozens of Members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats.

The American people deserve nothing less than a truly independent Ombudsman, especially those facing threats to their health by uncontrolled hazardous and toxic waste sites across the Nation, most recently at Ground Zero in New York City.

I enter private life today as a citizen enriched by my working relationship with American communities and with a steadfast assurance that this remains a government of, by and for the people. As my role as National Ombudsman ends, I will continue to work in truth with any and all for the protection of the health, safety, and environment of American citizens.

cc: US Senate
US House of Representatives
Service Lists for National Ombudsman Cases
Linda Fisher
Nikki L. Tinsley
Gary Johnson
Marianne Lamont Horinko
Michael Shapiro
Hugh B. Kaufman
Douglas Bell