



New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers

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Rail Passenger Association claims conflict of interest by Governor Christie – appeals NJ Transit sale of property to Princeton University.

The New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers (**NJ-ARP**) announced today that it had appealed a June 25th decision by the Board of Directors of New Jersey Transit to the New Jersey Superior Court Appellate Division. The filing asks the court to declare that the NJ Transit Board knowingly acted in violation of the New Jersey Public Transportation Act and the Open Public Meetings Act, when it authorized a sale to Princeton University of state transportation agency's remaining property rights in the Princeton Branch "Dinky" station and surrounding land. The proposed sale will facilitate Princeton University's plan to dismantle the station and develop the railroad property for academic and commercial uses. The University bought the station buildings in 1984 but New Jersey Transit retained the operating rights and an easement for public transit use. The decision authorizes NJ Transit management to sell the easement to the University in return for an easement on other property and a sum of money yet to be determined.

According to Jack May, Vice President of **NJ-ARP**, the NJ Transit decision "represents a breach of NJ Transit's fiduciary obligations to the traveling public." He said that the decision "enables the abandonment of rail service and the destruction of an historic station," "will have a devastating impact on commuters and the viability of the line," and "should never have been made without a full public hearing." Instead, Mr. May said, "the decision was made by a rubber stamp board controlled by Governor Chris Christie in a special meeting called at the last minute with no meaningful opportunity for public input." The appeal claims that NJ Transit violated the public's due process hearing rights.

All New Jersey Transit Board decisions are submitted to the Governor for review and go into effect unless they are vetoed by the Governor. Governor Christie is an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees of Princeton University. Philip G. Craig, a Director of **NJ-ARP**, said the Governor has been "an outspoken supporter" of Princeton University's plans to develop the railroad property for academic and commercial purposes and move the train terminus farther away from the town center." Mr. Craig said the Governor "ignored the impact on the over 1,000 daily riders who travel on the Princeton Branch and disregarded strong opposition within the community." The appeal claims that the Governor has a conflict of interest and should have recused himself.

The Princeton-based citizens group *Save the Dinky, Inc.* and Anne Neumann, a Princeton resident, joined **NJ-ARP** in the appeal which was submitted for filing on August 8, 2013 to the New Jersey Superior Court Appellate Division.

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