

## Interview

# Richard Sullivan, President Environmental Endowment for New Jersey

*Richard Sullivan is the President of the Environmental Endowment for New Jersey.*

**National Environmental Law Center:** How and why did the Environmental Endowment for New Jersey begin?

*Richard Sullivan:* The Endowment, incorporated in April 1991, was established in order to receive and administer a \$900,000 settlement of a \$4 million lawsuit brought under the Federal Clean Water Act by NELC.

The suit was brought on behalf of the Friends of the Earth and the Public Interest Research Group of New Jersey against PDT Terminals of Bayonne, New Jersey.

The polluter had been fined for dumping excessive amounts of waste into the Kill Van Kull, a New Jersey waterway.

Essentially, with agreement of the parties, the court ordered the money to be used to give environmental improvement to the affected areas.

**NELC:** Who benefits from this settlement?

*R.S.:* Ultimately, the people living in these areas and the environment should benefit from this settlement.

It's, in a sense, a recycling of money from the company that polluted the water back to the environment and the public.

**NELC:** Who will receive awards from the Endowment?

*R.S.:* We want to award grants to projects that will have the greatest effect, the greatest benefit.

But more specifically, the Endowment will award grants to support local, regional or statewide environmental projects that will have direct benefit in or near the tidally related New York/New Jersey Harbor, although some of the efforts may be greater than the Northeast quadrant.

The Endowment will show a preference to environmental organizations that have a special non-profit status from the Internal Revenue Service.

A range of eligible projects may be accepted, including research, litigation and public education that will promote the conservation, preservation and improvement of the environment including the air, land and water.

We will not award grants to individuals, or for operating expenses of organizations, or to endowments, however. The amount of grants are likely to range from \$500 to \$15,000.

**NELC:** What process does the Endowment use to award funds?

*RS:* The Endowment's board, which was created by a provision made in the settlement, is made up of



six other volunteer board members, five which represent environmental interests, and one board member from the firm that paid the settlement.

Our board is now going through the first set of grant proposals and The Endowment is scheduled to award the first funds on Earth Day of this year. We will award monies to the groups or agencies which meet our criteria and have the highest qualifications to affect these areas.

**NELC:** What is the long range plan for the Endowment, will you be receiving other settlements?

*RS:* Of course we would like to see other pollution cases with similar settlements, where a part of the settlement is put into escrow. That way we'll have a continuous cycle of money coming in and the Endowment able to award money to many organizations that can help the affected areas. ♦

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For more information about the Environmental Endowment for New Jersey, contact them directly at: Pennington Office Park, 114 Titus Mill Road, Pennington, NJ 08534, (609) 737-9698.