

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 180

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 11, 1997

By Assemblymen ROONEY, ROMANO and Garcia

- 1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** disapproving the provision of State incentives
2 to subsidize businesses that ignore their environmental responsibilities.
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- 4 **WHEREAS**, The State of New Jersey, the most densely populated state in the
5 nation, has had a long history of environmental degradation based upon its
6 industrial and commercial past; and
- 7 **WHEREAS**, Despite the number of hazardous waste sites in this State, and the
8 level of pollution entering our waters, the people of the State have made a
9 strong effort to hold those people and businesses responsible accountable
10 for their actions in order to cleanup these dangerous sites and contaminated
11 waterways; and
- 12 **WHEREAS**, Many of the corporations that do businesses in this State have
13 taken responsibility for their past environmental actions and have
14 committed to cleanup sites that they have contaminated; and
- 15 **WHEREAS**, The expenditure of taxpayer money and the use of State resources
16 to subsidize the business activities of large corporations should be sparingly
17 used and should not be offered to any business that has a poor record of
18 protecting the people and the natural resources of this State from the
19 discharge of hazardous contaminants that they produce; and
- 20 **WHEREAS**, The General Electric Company has recently received substantial
21 taxpayer benefits from the sale of \$167,500,000 of New Jersey Economic
22 Development Authority taxable bonds to finance the purchase and leasing
23 of equipment and leasehold improvements for MSNBC, located in
24 Secaucus and for CNBC, Inc, located in Fort Lee; and
- 25 **WHEREAS**, The General Electric Company is also receiving \$2.9 million per
26 year in tax credits from the State as part of the Business Employment
27 Incentive Program; and
- 28 **WHEREAS**, The General Electric Company has been one of the major
29 corporate polluters in the State, significantly contaminating dozens of sites
30 throughout the State with hazardous waste and significantly contributing to
31 the degradation of the water quality by the release of toxic substances into
32 our rivers and streams; and
- 33 **WHEREAS**, The General Electric Company has also been responsible for the
34 discharge of PCBs into the Hudson River, which contaminants have
35 entered the New York/New Jersey Harbor, contaminating fish and

1 prompting the issuance of fish advisories, and contaminating the harbor
2 bottom thus making the dredging of the harbor environmentally harmful and
3 significantly more expensive;

4 **WHEREAS**, The General Electric Company has been recalcitrant in meeting its
5 environmental obligations by taking responsibility for its actions as,
6 demonstrated by the fact that rather than accept responsibility for the
7 discharge of mercury contamination into a building it once owned and
8 operated, and which is located on Grand Street in Hoboken, the General
9 Electric Company has engaged in a series of legal maneuvers designed to
10 escape responsibility for its actions and instead to place the blame for the
11 contaminated state of the building on the buildings current and innocent
12 residential tenants; and

13 **WHEREAS**, It is poor public policy to assist such corporate polluters such as
14 the General Electric Company through the provision of State supported
15 incentives such as those recently bestowed on the General Electric
16 Company and such incentives should not be given in the future to the
17 General Electric Company or to other similar corporate polluters; now,
18 therefore,

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20 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

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22 1. The General Assembly of the State of New Jersey expresses its
23 disapproval of the provision of State supported special incentives for
24 corporations that refuse to take responsibility for the environmental
25 degradation which they caused.

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27 2. A duly authenticated copy of this resolution, signed by the Speaker of
28 the General Assembly and attested to by the Clerk thereof, shall be
29 transmitted to the Governor of the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey
30 Commissioner of Commerce, and to the Chief Executive Officer of the
31 General Electric Company.

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STATEMENT

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36 Recently the General Electric Company has benefited from significant State
37 subsidies for its operation of MSNBC in Secaucus and CNBC, Inc. in Fort
38 Lee. These subsidies consisted of the New Jersey Economic Development
39 Authority issuing \$167,500,000 in taxable bonds for the purchase and leasing
40 of equipment and leasehold improvements. The General Electric Company is
41 also to receive \$2.9 million in State aide under the Business Employment
42 Incentive Program. The General Electric Company has received these
43 benefits despite the fact that they have failed to clean up dozens of hazardous

1 waste sites around the State which they have created and even though they are
2 responsible for the significant degradation of many of the State's waterways.

3 At the same time the General Electric Company was receiving these
4 benefits, they were in the process of engaging in legal maneuvers designed to
5 deny their liability for contaminating a building on Grand Street in Hoboken
6 with mercury. Instead of taking responsibility for their actions the General
7 Electric Company has instead has sought to place liability on the residential
8 tenants of the building, persons who did not discharge the mercury and had no
9 reason to know it was there when they acquired their properties.

10 Because of the poor environmental record of the General Electric
11 Company, this resolution expresses the disapproval of the General Assembly
12 of the State of New Jersey in granting State business incentives to
13 irresponsible corporate polluters such as the General Electric Company.

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18 Disapproves the provision of taxpayer-supported incentives to subsidize
19 businesses that ignore their environmental responsibilities.