

May 24, 2010

The Honorable Jack Markell
Tatnall Building
William Penn Street
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Governor Markell:

Just like many Delawareans, I was more than a bit disturbed yesterday morning when I read the News Journal article about the DeIDOT lease “deal” with Chris Tigani and N.K.S. Distributors that was apparently arranged through former Governor Ruth Ann Minner and members of her administration.

I don't have to remind you that the financial situation in Delaware remains under strain. Recent announcements about the layoffs of teachers and paraprofessionals in numerous school districts are a reminder of that fiscal picture. We lawmakers, who collectively are elected to oversee the running of our state, have been asking and demanding all our state agencies for ways to save money. We are reminded again and again that nothing is too small for consideration.

Even in the best of fiscal times, the sweetheart deal we learned about yesterday would be unacceptable. Given the challenges of the past few years, and the solutions to those challenges including tax and fee increases as well as spending cuts, it is very to disheartening to learn about this deal and how it occurred. I understand and appreciate the frustration of the public and I share it as well.

I respectfully request an investigation of how this lease came into being, what the current status of the lease is, and whether or not it can be terminated. It seems to me that the public process that would occur with a sale of excess land was intentionally avoided here by entering into a lease. Let's not kid ourselves here; a 66 year lease is essentially a sale. If nothing else comes out of this apparent public fleecing, it should be that DeIDOT leases, especially long-term leases, be subject to the same public process as sales.

Sincerely,



Gregory F. Lavelle
State Representative
11th District