

COALITION OF
JOURNALISTS FOR
OPEN GOVERNMENT
1101 Wilson Blvd, Suite 1100, Arlington, VA. 22209 703-807-2100

4/11/2005

Beth Parke
Executive Director
Society of Environmental Journalists
PO Box 2492, Jenkintown, PA 19046

Dear Beth,

I write in support of the Society of Environmental Journalists and the extraordinary contribution Joe Davis and the Watchdog Project make in the fight for open government.

There are very few journalistic organizations involved in this critical battle that have been as vigilant and as proactive as SEJ, and very few people as concerned, knowledgeable and dedicated as Joe.

I hope that your potential underwriters know this and understand that any investment they might make in SEJ's work will pay substantial dividends in areas far beyond your organization, or the environmental reporting world. It will be of significant benefit to all of us who labor to provide greater access to government records and meetings and who seek to curtail unnecessary secrecy.

As you know the Coalition of Journalists for Open Government is an alliance of more than 30 journalism-related organizations. We are concerned about secrecy in government and the closure of public records and public meetings at all levels. Most of our coalition partners have individual freedom of information programs. As coalition members, they share information, coordinate activities, and, when appropriate, combine efforts and resources in the fight for open government.

I cannot begin to tell you how vital SEJ and the Watchdog Project and Joe have been to that collective effort. Joe literally led me along in the early months of the coalition as I struggled to understand the ways of Washington. His advice, counsel and support were invaluable. He did even more hand-holding when secrecy and pseudo-classification moved into the environmental area, explaining complex regulations, researching impact information and sometimes anonymously writing major sections of petitions that went out on behalf of the coalition.

I know from taking inquiries from Joe and from talking with others he has worked with, that he brings a similar doggedness, dedication and thoughtfulness to the reporting and writing of his Tipsheet newsletter. That makes it a valuable resource for me and I'm sure for many, many others.

I would urge potential supporters to give generously to SEJ to keep its Watchdog project going strong. We all need it.

Sincerely,

Pete Weitzel
Coordinator