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## **Bloomberg's Economic Development Office Announces Rushed Vote on More Bonds for Yankees' and Mets' Stadiums** *Back Door Giuliani-Era Practice Revived*

New York, December 23, 2009 – Good Jobs New York today denounced the New York City Industrial Development Agency (IDA) for announcing a rushed vote on \$454 million in proposed additional tax-exempt financing for the new Yankee and Mets Stadiums.

In the wake of a [statement](#) by New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr. assailing the IDA for scheduling the vote on Inauguration Day, the IDA has [rescheduled](#) the board vote for January 16, the day after the hearing, not the normal five days after. The rushed voting process revives the IDA's practice of secretive and questionable economic development deals that were the norm during the Giuliani administration.

The new date for this important meeting gives IDA board members *less than 24 hours* to consider the testimony presented the previous day on two major projects that have been widely considered to be [egregious corporate giveaways](#). This raises other transparency concerns such as:

- **Deviating from regular IDA calendar:** The IDA's hearing on proposed financing for the projects is being held outside the normal monthly public hearing calendar. The regularly scheduled IDA public hearing for January is on the 8<sup>th</sup> (where a separate project will be presented), while the board meeting originally slated on the 13<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled.
- **Weak board attendance:** Since few IDA board members attend the agency's required public hearings, it is unlikely that the majority of the board will have heard public testimony prior to voting on these two projects. Those members not in attendance must rely on copies of testimony submitted and the IDA staff's reporting, as there are no stenographers at IDA hearings.

Moreover, the public financing scheme approved by the IDA in 2006 for the new Yankee Stadium is under investigation by the U.S. House of Representatives' [Subcommittee on Domestic Policy](#) and by State Assemblyman [Richard Brodsky](#). Earlier this month, for example, Brodsky revealed evidence that suggests communication between City and Yankees' officials led the city to artificially inflate land values to support more bond debt.

“It is outrageous for the Bloomberg Administration to rush *additional* public financing for the wealthiest teams in baseball while city, state and federal legislators are grappling with the worst budget crisis in decades,” said Bettina Damiani, Project Director of [Good Jobs New York](#). “How do entertainment corporations outrank the city's infrastructure and employment needs?”

This rushed vote is a giant step backward for transparency at the IDA. In 2006, the [IDA codified policies](#) it had practiced since 2004 that made significant steps forward, including allowing more time between hearing and board meetings, and releasing cost benefit analyses and project applications five days prior to public hearings. These policies have enabled New Yorkers to participate in meaningful debate, as evident at IDA hearings when financing was proposed for various post 9/11 projects and for the initial allocation of tax-free financing for the Yankees and Mets, for example.

“We urge the IDA and the Bloomberg Administration to reschedule the vote until after the Inauguration, so board members have sufficient time to review public comments and IDA materials associated with the projects,” said Damiani.

Should the IDA board approve this financing, it will cost more than \$80 million in lost tax revenue, bringing total public costs for both the Yankees and [Mets](#) deals to nearly \$1.4 billion, with most going to the [Yankee Stadium](#) project.

The [public hearing](#) will be held at 10:00am on Thursday, January 15 at the IDA offices in Lower Manhattan, 110 William St., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor. The Board meeting to vote is currently scheduled for January 16 at 9:00am at the same address.

Editor’s note: The IDA has 15 board members: five appointed by the mayor on the recommendation of Borough Presidents, with others, such as the City Comptroller, the City Corporation Counsel, and the City Planning Commissioner automatically seated “ex-officio.” The remainder, including the chair, are appointed by the mayor.

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