

Media Alert

Descendants of First Freed Slaves in Maryland to Protest US DOJ's AAG Tom Perez's Alleged Role in Shutting Down Investigation of African American Land Fraud Case to Protect his Own Interests; Call for DOJ Investigation.

Date and Time: Tuesday, July 16th, 1:00 p.m.

Location: United States Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC

Sandy Spring, Maryland - Residents of the Farm Road kinship community, mostly descendants of the first freed slaves in Maryland, have recently learned that DOJ's Civil Rights Division Chief, Tom Perez, while serving in a past position, had personal knowledge of actions related to their community's road and street addresses wrongfully being wiped off County and State maps. Consequently their deeded properties, portions of the farm where their ancestors toiled as slaves, have been left valueless and unbuildable other than to neighboring developers.

Farm Road residents believe Mr. Perez, while serving as Maryland's Secretary of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, had personal knowledge of, and involvement with, shutting down the investigation into the related wrongful acts. WUSA TV has widely reported that the kinship community's problems emanate from allegedly fraudulent plans submitted by State licensed professionals to the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (the "Commission"). When ordered to shut down the investigation into the Commission, the investigator resigned in protest. Perez went on to become the Chief of DOJ's Civil Rights Division.

Local and State politicians have closed ranks to protect the Commission – the largest land use agency in the DC area that regulates a multi-billion dollar construction industry and, according to the *Examiner*, "by its own description and allegations of its critics, answers to nobody in state and county government."ⁱ

Documents have now surfaced indicating that multiple investigations into the Commission were shut down by Maryland Attorney General Doug Gansler's office and Perez's State agency, including the investigation of a layperson masquerading as an engineer. The "engineer's" resume states he worked on the Metro Subway System, as well as hospitals and nursing homes and other projects in eight states. Gansler's office has not provided any documents in response to a Public Information Act request seeking documents evidencing that it alerted any jurisdictions, or WMATA – the agency that manages the Washington, DC area transit system, to the public safety risk associated with the layperson acting as an engineer.

The Farm Road community also recently learned that the attorney who filed the civil rights complaint on behalf of Farm Road resident William Rounds left his private practice to become Perez's right-hand man, while Mr. Rounds was left to fend for himself.

Maryland Attorney General Gansler denies that any investigation into Farm Road ever occurred and claims the issue is not a State matter. WUSA TV has reported otherwise including evidence that the State investigation was shut down “for partisan or other reasons unrelated to the credibility of the material.”

NAACP’s Vernon Ricks testified at a June 26th Maryland Legislative hearing regarding these matters that, “All things lead in the direction of denial of civil rights” and Dr. Sterling King, a former President and current Education Committee Chair of the Black Minister’s Conference of Montgomery County testified that, “Elements connected with the government helped to defraud blacks out of their land and that is what seems to be basically at work here.”

A spokesman for Tom Perez did not respond to a request for comment to WUSA TV regarding the planned protest.

WUSA TV’s recent coverage on these matters:

07/11/13

[Video and Article - Farm Road Landowners Plan Protest Targeting Civil Rights Division of US Dept. of Justice](#)

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[Video and Article - Maryland Attorney General Denies Shutting Down "Farm Road" Investigation](#)

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[Video and Article - Farm Road Investigation Shut Down for Partisan Reasons](#)

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For additional information please go to www.SaveSandySpring.org or contact:

Logistics - Judy Penny 301 905-2225

Subject matter – Steve Kanstoroom 301 503-6078

Community Concerns – Reverend Sterling King – 301 649-6626

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ⁱ The Examiner, Dena Levits, 05/31/2007