

SHOPPING FOR A REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY:

GUIDANCE FOR BLUE ACRES PROPERTY OWNERS

Selling your property to a State government agency like the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) will make your closing unique and different from what you experienced when you originally bought your property. By selling your property, you and NJDEP are moving toward a common goal: moving you and your family out of harm's way as soon as possible. Hiring a competent, responsive attorney to represent you in the closing process is critical to meet this mutual goal. With this in mind, NJDEP has put together a list of questions you may want to ask any attorney you consider hiring to represent you at closing:

1. Are you in good standing with the State Bar to practice law in the State of New Jersey?
2. How long have you been licensed to practice law in New Jersey?
3. Does your practice specifically focus on real estate law? How much of your work is dedicated to real estate?
4. Does your office regularly handle residential real estate closings? How many per month? How many staff members do you have available to dedicate to real estate closings?
5. How many clients overall do you usually work with at once?
6. How much would you charge to handle a residential real estate closing with NJDEP that occurs either by mail or virtually? Are there any unexpected costs I would have to pay? How does your billing process work?
7. Have you ever worked on real estate transactions with NJDEP or other government entities? Have you specifically worked with NJDEP on the closing of a Blue Acres property? If so, how many, and may I contact those clients?
8. What services do you typically provide in a residential real estate closing?
9. Will you be available to timely respond to correspondence and communications received from NJDEP's legal team? Will you be available to timely respond to inquiries and correspondence from me as your client? Do you have the ability to communicate by e-mail? Are you willing to travel to meet in person, if necessary?
10. Given your workload, will you be able to prepare the closing information/documentation required by NJDEP within very specific, short timeframes?
11. Do you have any experience handling short sales?
12. Can you give me a list of past clients I could contact as references for you?
13. Do you have a website I could visit to learn more about your practice?
14. Have you handled virtual closings before? If so, how many?