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Hoboken Site Developer Dismisses Law Firm

By [CHARLES V. BAGLIJAN](#). 30, 2014

Rockefeller Group, a real estate developer whose proposed office complex in Hoboken, N.J., is at the center of allegations that associates of Gov. [Chris Christie](#) threatened to withhold [Hurricane Sandy](#) relief money from the city unless the project received approval, has severed its connections with a law firm with close ties to the governor.

Rockefeller Group said on Thursday that last week it had terminated its contract with the firm, Wolff & Samson, ending a relationship that began in 2007.

“Given the investigation,” Dwayne Doherty, a spokesman for Rockefeller Group, said, “we’ve decided to shift our work on the project to another firm.”

Rockefeller Group said the allegations were “deplorable” if true.

Mayor Dawn Zimmer of Hoboken said earlier this month that aides to the governor had threatened to withhold Hurricane Sandy money from her city if she failed to move the project forward. Federal prosecutors are investigating the accusations.

The Christie administration has denied linking the billion-dollar office project to hurricane aid and questioned the timing of Ms. Zimmer’s claims. The mayor made her accusations after a scandal developed over allegations that officials had closed access lanes to the George Washington Bridge in an apparent attempt to punish a mayor who had not endorsed the governor for re-election.

Rockefeller Group bought a 4.9-acre industrial parcel at the north end of Hoboken for about \$100 million in 2008, hoping to build a large office complex. The company hired Wolff & Samson, a law firm with extensive ties to Republicans, for land use, environmental and lobbying work.

Wolff & Samson was founded by David Samson, whom Mr. Christie named as chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in 2010. A former member of Mr. Christie’s cabinet, Lori Grifa, who now works at the law firm, lobbied state officials on behalf of the project.

Ms. Zimmer has provided prosecutors with emails and statements that, she says, show that she has come under increasing pressure from lobbyists working for Rockefeller Group and from state officials.