

New Jersey Highlands Council **Letter 27**

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From my perspective, the RMP does not put enough emphasis on economic development and growth in the region. The plan is not balanced and only focuses on environmental factors. The only areas for potential growth are in the "existing community zones." These are areas that are already developed, and have very limited redevelopment potential.

The regional master plan severely limits development potential and therefore reduces the value of property in the region. There is no mechanism in place to compensate landowners for the lost value in their property. The act required that a TDR program be in place before the RMP was adopted. That never happened. Therefore, the RMP should not be in effect until a real TDR program is up and running.

The RMP contemplates a process for municipalities to opt in to the RMP. The Council has adopted a checklist ordinance (COO) that circumvents the rigorous procedures outlined in the RMP. Use of the COO circumvents the plan conformance process, is not transparent, and undermines good planning. The Council should stop using the COO immediately.

While I understand the importance of protecting natural resources, many of the standards in the RMP, such as 1,000-foot buffers around vernal ponds, and minimum lot sizes of 88-acres for one home, are excessive and not consistent with current DEP regulations. This should be addressed by bringing RMP standards into conformance with already established regulations and policies.

The State plan identifies the need for 143 Centers within the region. Only 18 have been designated. If we don't identify appropriate places for development, you will force our businesses and residents. I am particularly concerned that my 4 children will not be able to find employment or housing in the Highlands region.

Respondent

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