

New Jersey Highlands Council **Letter 40**

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Web Response

New Jersey residents, Please find the following information. I was born and raised in New Jersey. My Father was selected to the 1966 Constitutional Convention for New Jersey and incorporated two major cities in New Jersey. I was born and raised to believe that certain rights would always be held by citizens of the United States. Perhaps the most significant right was that of land ownership. Indeed our forefathers recognized the utmost importance of land ownership as a way of creating a commitment to this great country. Twelve years ago the Highlands discussion began. I attended every meeting that asked for public comment especially those that occurred in Patterson New Jersey. I was offered engineering information that at best could be described as "dubious". I listened to repeated individuals testifying that indeed I did not own my property. I was just a "renter" because we all die sometime. I was told my property did not belong to me it belonged to the state. Having an engineering background I inspected the information provided and found all of the documentation was based on speculative criteria surrounding ground water and its percolation migration. I was shocked to learn that the most stringent criteria would be placed on certain areas in the designated Highlands zone, while zoning requirements of central New Jersey areas would be relaxed to make up for the "lack of development". That additional development would create a draw on the reseviors that required time to back up the flow of water to create a percolation rate that would provide clean water. Clearly the Highland's was not about clean water. I questioned how an entire township with the most difficult DEP stream, river, steep slope, wetlands frontage requirements and now ten acre zoning could now be conceived as having the possibility for overdevelopment. Indeed Lebanon Township prior to the Highlands would have seen less than 400 total homes constructed in it parameters because of the already excessive DEP regulations. It became clear that the Highlands was little more than a political movement set forth to squash growth and asset accumulation in districts that did not emulate Governor McGreevy. I confirmed the same with his chief of staff that I attended school with. Sadly this process was wrapped in a veil of "keeping water safe". When political parties suggest they will keep their constituency safe from themselves that is when we are no longer a democracy. The Highland's provision is a land grab nothing more. New Jersey now finds itself governed by a gentleman that will make the platform of his presidency personal freedoms and restricted government intervention. How will that be possible in a state where the largest single land grab by a government body ever has occurred and not been rectified. Our planning boards mean nothing. Local officials are now meaningless. We have no rights as owners in the Highlands. Sadly the community itself is now dying. Our atndance rates to schools have plummeted. It will not be long until we have to keep all facilities operating with no new young families to support the existing infrastructure. We will have the largest chipmunks anywhere but no community to share it with. I am an advocate for human beings, specifically good taxpayers in the state of New Jersey. I am ashamed at the complacency of my generation to have allowed themselves to have their rights removed. Thank You

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