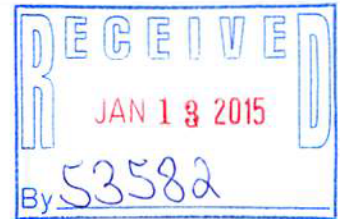


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Thank you for allowing this opportunity to provide comments regarding the Highlands Regional Master Plan. I am a resident of the Highlands Planning Area as well as Conservation Chair for the NJ Sierra Club Chapter.

Recommendation 1: The 2008 Highlands RMP states "The RMP policies support the State Global Warming Response Act in reducing the level of greenhouse gas emissions in the state by the year 2020 through the reduction of mobile sources, resource protection and energy efficient practices." The 2008 RMP uses this principle to address air quality issues as well as the importance of "forest preservation" role in sequestration of carbon dioxide. The planning process focus on "mitigation" needs to be expanded to encourage development of renewable energy within the Highlands Region and to incorporate concepts of resiliency planning and "adaptation". New technology developments in solar, wind, household geothermal systems, and micro-hydroelectric power generation provide new opportunities for the Highlands Counsel to enhance property values and generate jobs.

Recommendation 2: The Highlands RMP should be expanded to address policy for natural gas/oil pipelines and power lines development. These land developments or intrusions adversely impact property values and create significant environmental problems. The experiences and lessons learned from Tennessee Gas Pipeline expansion and Susquehanna Roseland Line project need to be incorporated into the planning process to ensure transparency for all stake holders.

Recommendation 3: The 2008 Highlands RMP Policy 2g3 is "To adopt and implement water quality protections through Plan Conformance, local development review, and Highlands Project Review." Objective 2g3a states "Prohibit land uses that would increase pollutant loadings to waters for which TMDLs have been adopted by the NJDEP unless in compliance with the relevant TMDL." (Total maximum daily loads of pollutants prescribed by NJ DEP for water bodies) Oil pipelines pose unique problems. First, the operation of pipelines allows the transport of a variety of fluids; i.e., various types of unrefined oil and configurations of various grades of gasoline and diesel fuels, It is impracticable to know what may leak. Secondly, since 2010 fewer than 20% of pipeline oil spills that have monitoring systems are discovered by those monitoring systems; the rest are found by people along the pipeline. Recently, a leak at a nuclear power plant went undetected for weeks, allowing up to 2,000 gallons of oil to flow into Lake Michigan. Unpredictability of the nature of the fluid and the detection of leaks poses a significant risk of catastrophe for our waters and habitat. Recommend that an objective to "Ban all oil transmission pipelines" be included in the revised RMP.