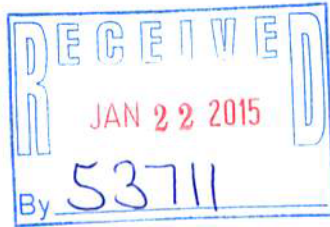


01-18-15



New Jersey Highlands Council

Attn: 2014 RMP Monitoring Program

100 North Road (Route 513)

Chester, New Jersey 07930-2322

William Koellhoffer

██████████
Stanhope, New Jersey 07874

RE: Comments regarding the NJ Highlands Act

The Highlands Act has seemed to have a detrimental effect on those communities who are within it's currently established boundaries. For Byram Township, who unfortunately has about 98% of the Township within the Highlands, it appears that the lack of allowed commercial development is continually pushing the tax burden more and more onto the backs of the residential homeowners. When the act was being proposed, we were told that curtailing development would actually increase real estate values since virtually no more homes could be built. Sounded good, but the exact opposite is becoming reality. This in combination of the housing bubble bursting has made taxes on current homeowners a force which is driving many out of the township and the State for that matter.

Talk of compensation for farmers and homeowners within the housing is just that, talk, empty promises. So we are in effect penalized on real estate values to protect the water sources for New Jersey communities to the east and south who continue to develop and raise more and more demands for more water.

I would think a water usage tax on everyone – residential and commercial – who benefits from the Highlands Act would be a start, with ALL proceeds going directly to the affected farmers and homeowners to help alleviate their growing tax burdens and continued loss of land values.

Sincerely,

William Koellhoffer