



Alberta Piasecki

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Great Meadows, NJ 07838

To: Highlands Council Members,  
Re: Highlands Regional Master Plan – Comments

*Liberty*  
I am writing this letter to express my concerns with the impact the Highlands Act has on my property values and those in similar situations. I have two parcels of land in Independence Township that I would like to sell to supplement my meager retirement income. The parcels are 2 acres and 17 acres in size. Because of the Highlands Act restrictions these can't be sold to individual home owners as building lots since they would require a septic system and do not meet the minimum lot size specified in the Highlands Act. As a result of this act these parcels have greatly diminished in value and are almost unsellable. I feel the Highlands Act restrictions have greatly damaged my financial security with no means of compensation for the loss of my rights.

Additionally how are people supposed to be able to afford to purchase and build a home when the lot size requirements are so large for a septic system. I understand the need to protect groundwater sources but these restrictions on lot size seem excessive. Surely, for fairness sake, there needs to be a better balance between the needs of the environment and the property rights of home owners.

Alternatively, I would propose that if the state really wants to keep the lot size restrictions so large, then an increase in the Green Acres Open Space Tax, currently in use for farmland preservation, be considered as a funding source to compensate home owners for the loss of value to their property. I know that no one likes tax increases but in this case a good argument could be made for an increase. This proposal would keep the land preserved while addressing the lost rights of individual property owners. I hope that you will seriously consider this letter and its arguments.

Respectfully,

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Alberta Piasecki,  
Home owner, Senior Citizen