

New Jersey Highlands Council **Letter 65**

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We all want to have clean water and a healthy beautiful environment, but some of the Highlands Act provisions defy logic. For instance, if we need 88 acres to clean one septic system, then shouldn't we clean up all the exiting septic systems especially when existing sewer and water systems have been built and have capacity that are not being used. For instance, the Hackettstown sewer and water system had been expanded with the idea that it would service and replace hundreds of septic systems in Mt. Olive especially along Smithtown Road area when Kaplan built the sewer lines up Stephen State Park Road to service the two projects: Oak Hill I and II, built in the late 1990's. Kaplan also built the water tower behind Dorset Dr. The logical idea was that the sewer line would extend along Smithtown Road and hook up all the older homes on the eastern part of Smithtown Road and into Karen Place. The end result was that all the septic systems would be eliminated over time as contemplated by the town and the Hackettstown Sewer Authority. All the waste water would be diverted to the sewer plants and cleaned before being release down river. However, the Highlands Act prohibits extension of sewer service, so the hundreds of homes in the area continue to use septic systems for forever. So if one septic requires 88 acres to clean the water, then a 100 hundred homes would technically require 8800 acres to clean the septic systems. So all the good that the Highlands Act is supposedly doing is being undone by the provision to prohibit sewer extension when the capacity has already been built and in place. This is especially undesirable as these homes are at the top of the mountain and water only flow downhill as dictated by gravity. If the Highlands Act is based on science, shouldn't we use the scientific logics for the best of society and used these areas with sewage capacity as receiving areas so that we do not use the areas without sewer for housing. The logic is obvious, but, somehow, the Highlands Act is contrary to this logic as it bans sewer extension. Furthermore, how can the Highlands Act treat Mt. Olive as if it is virgin land dictating that most of it is in the preservation area when t the 2010 United States Census, there were 28,117 people, 10,690 households, and 7,323 families residing in the township. The population density was 956.1 per square mile (369.2/km2). There were 11,244 housing units in the town at an average density of 382.4 per square mile (147.6/km2). On the other hand, Mendham Township is all planning areas. At the 2010 United States Census, there were 5,869 people, 1,952 households, and 1,659 families residing in the township. The population density was 328.4 per square mile (126.8/km2). There were 2,062 housing units at an average density of 115.4 per square mile (44.6/km2). Mount Olive has three times the population and housing density per sq. mile as compared to Mendham and Mount Olive is mostly in the pristine/Preservation area while Mendham is in the Planning area. So much for logic again or it is just who had friends in high places. Hopefully, the current Highlands Council would place science and logic over politics.

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