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HDC Bank approves two offers for Highlands Land Preservation

CHESTER, N.J.—The New Jersey Highlands Development Credit Bank (HDC Bank) approved two offers to landowners to preserve over 53 acres of land in Warren County, providing up to \$940,000 for land preservation in the Highlands Preservation Area.

The HDC Bank was provided \$10,000,000 in initial capital funding to purchase development rights under the Highlands Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program, an essential tool of the Highlands Regional Master Plan. Today marked the end of the third round of TDR offers to landowners in the Bank's initial purchase program. To date, the HDC Bank has made offers to preserve 484 acres for a total amount of \$6,784,000. The HDC Bank has a deadline of November 3, 2011 to submit HDC Allocation applications to the Highlands Council for the fourth round of acquisitions.

If the HDC Bank's offers are accepted by landowners, lands in the Highlands Preservation Area will be protected through deed restrictions. The TDR Program allows participating owners to retain ownership of their land while safeguarding the region's significant environmental and agricultural resources, which include the drinking water supply for 5.4 million New Jersey residents.

"The important role of the HDC Bank is to provide an opportunity for relief for Highlands landowners while preserving Highlands resources," said Theodore J. Maglione, chairman of the HDC Bank's board. "The acquisition program is critical both for landowners in financial hardship and those who might not qualify for the Green Acres or Farmland Preservation programs."

The TDR program awards credits to eligible property owners as a means of offsetting the loss of pre-Highlands Act development opportunities. To determine the number of credits a property may be eligible to receive, the program evaluates a property's size and location and considers local zoning

and environmental laws that were in effect the day prior to adoption of the Highlands Act (August 9, 2004). Credits may be sold to the HDC Bank or a conservation organization after the landowner records a deed of easement limiting a property's potential development. In the future, credits may also be sold to developers, who can use them to increase the density of a residential development project, or to intensify commercial or industrial development, within an approved Highlands TDR receiving zone.

To be considered for the fourth round, Preservation Area property owners must submit an HDC Allocation Application to the Highlands Council no later than **November 3, 2011**. The Council's HDC Allocation Application is available at:

http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/hdcbank/application_allocation.pdf

Owners of residentially zoned property within the Highland Preservation Area can receive an estimate of potential credits by using a feature on the Highlands Council website (HDC estimator application at: <http://maps.njhighlands.us/hgis/hdc/>). Property owners are then encouraged to apply for confirmation of credits. Landowners of commercially zoned parcels should apply directly to the Highlands Council. Properties within the priority acquisition categories will be considered by the Bank at its meeting scheduled on February 2, 2012.

“The Highlands TDR Program helps to steer development away from green spaces and toward areas that have the infrastructure to accept more development,” said Eileen Swan, Executive Director of the Highlands Council and the HDC Bank. “To date, the Highlands Council has approved seven Highlands Centers to encourage economic growth, redevelopment and voluntary receiving zones to create a free market where HDC credits can be bought and sold.”

The actions by the bank do not take effect until 10 business days after minutes from the Highlands Council's next meeting have been delivered to Governor Christie for his review. For further information on the Highlands Development Credit Bank and the Highlands TDR program, see: <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/hdcbank/>