



NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COALITION

ACTION ALERT

Vote “YES” on Public Question #1, the Green Acres, Clean Water and Farmland Preservation Act of 2009, this Tuesday, November 3rd

On Tuesday, November 3rd, voters will be faced with a critical ballot question: whether or not to approve a \$400 million bond to continue funding the Garden State Preservation Trust. Voting “yes” is the only way New Jersey can continue to provide funding for open space and farmland preservation.

This ballot measure is especially important to the Highlands region. We depend on the funding to purchase land critical to preserving our watersheds that provide clean drinking water for over 5.4 million residents throughout the state. The Highlands Council has identified over 19,000 acres of land that needs to be preserved in order to protect our aquifers and water supply and the money to do this will only be available if this ballot question passes. Necessities like clean water may not be cheap, but they're a lot cheaper when we preserve our water at its Highlands source, rather than let its forests be clear-cut. When we don't let runoff from over-development spoil our groundwater, we are not forced to spend billions more on water treatment facilities.

Without this funding farmland preservation in the Highlands will come to halt. Over the last 60 years our state has lost 1 million acres of farmland. Considering New Jersey is only 4.8 million acres that is a devastating amount. Farmland preservation ensures we have the land needed to protect the agricultural soils that produce our food. The program in question on November 3rd has already preserved approximately 181,000 acres of the remaining 733,450 acres of farmland left in our state. Farmland preservation is critical for one of New Jersey's biggest economic sectors as well as the preservation of the community character in these rural areas.

Securing continued funding of the Garden State Preservation trust is also important in the Highlands to allow the farmers and landowners here the opportunity to sell their properties to the state. As part of the Highlands Act's protections, land acquisition in the Highlands will be a priority and conforming municipalities will receive precedence in funding.

In the past the Highlands has received 40% of the money dedicated in these open space preservation ballot measures. With approval of this bond act, we'll be investing in our home state and in our families' futures at a cost of just \$10 annually per household. By voting “yes” on Tuesday, the Highlands will continue to reap the benefits of the Green Acres and Farmland

Preservation programs. Only through securing this funding can we protect the vital water and agricultural resources of the Highlands region through the course of time. Vote “yes” November 3rd, and help New Jersey move forward to a green and sustainable future.

Get Involved!

We need volunteers Monday, November 2nd and Tuesday, November 3rd between 6 AM- 8AM and 5PM-7PM to help distribute “Vote Yes” materials at the Morristown Train Station. Please call our office at (973) 588-7190 to help reach out to the community on this important issue.

Additional Resources:

Keep It Green Campaign: <http://njkeepitgreen.org/index.htm>

Garden State Preservation Trust: <http://www.state.nj.us/gspt/>

Green Acres Program: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/>

State Agricultural Development Committee: <http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/>