



## New Jersey Highlands Coalition June Update

### Conformance

The Highlands Council did not hold a monthly meeting in April, but on May 19<sup>th</sup> four more towns conformed to the Highlands Act: Franklin Township (Warren County), Holland Township, Washington Township (Morris County) and Kinnelon Borough. All but Franklin have conformed both their Planning and Preservation Areas.

The momentum continues to grow as the total number of towns to have completed basic conformance is now 21! The next meeting will be held at the Council's offices in Chester on June 16<sup>th</sup> to review the petitions of Bloomsbury Borough, Pohatcong Township, Bloomingdale Borough, and the Town of Hackettstown.

### Highlands Council Nominees

Also on May 19<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Judiciary Committee met to vote on another of Governor Christie's anti-Highlands nominations to the Highlands Council, Mayor of Roxbury Jim Rilee. His nomination was moved out of Committee despite vigorous questioning about his ability to faithfully perform his duties in light of his public opposition to the Highlands Act.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup> the full Senate met to vote on the three other nominees already approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee: Robert Walton (Freeholder, Hunterdon County), Tim Dougherty (Mayor, Morristown Town), and James Mengucci (Councilman, Lopatcong Township). All were approved, including Mayor Rilee, despite arguments against by Senator Bob Smith (Chair, Senate Environment and Energy Committee and prime sponsor of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act). They will be seated on the Highlands Council this month at the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

At this time, the Senate Judiciary Committee is not considering the nominations of Sam Race (Mayor, White Township), or Richard Vohden (Freeholder, Sussex County.) Bergen County Surrogate Michael Dressler's nomination was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee at its May 31<sup>st</sup> meeting, and awaits full Senate confirmation. The

other Council nominees still waiting consideration by the Judiciary Committee are: Michael Tfrank (West Milford), Bruce James (Freeholder Director, Passaic County), and Michael Sebetich (Professor of Ecology, William Paterson University).

### **Lobby Days**

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, we sent our Campaign Coordinator to Washington DC to lobby in support of congressional sign-ons for a Dear Colleague Letter since sent to the Appropriations Committee asking for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Fund includes money for land acquisition across the nation, including in the Highlands and elsewhere in New Jersey. We succeeded in getting signatures from 150 representatives including 15 Republican lawmakers!

### **Upcoming Events**

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, you are encouraged to join us for a Lobby Day in Trenton to defend against weakening protections for New Jersey's environment. More information will be following, but please save the date!

Also, for current listings of Highlands-wide events, go to the "Highlands Events" section of our [website](#).

*For up-to-date information be sure to 'like' us on [Facebook](#) and 'follow' us on [Twitter @NJHighlanders!](#)*