



NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COALITION

NJ Senate votes tomorrow against DEP's increase in Highlands development density



The New Jersey Senate votes tomorrow on the joint resolution finding DEP violated legislative intent by adopting changes to the septic density provisions of the Highlands Rules. The Assembly passed its version of the joint resolution in December. If the Senate votes in favor tomorrow, then the Assembly must concur with the Senate's changes. Once that happens, DEP will have 30 days to amend the rule. If DEP fails to amend the rule, after one public

hearing by a committee of either the Senate or the Assembly, **upon passage of a resolution by both Houses, the rule is invalidated.**

DEP received 2,017 signed comments on its proposal to change the minimum lot sizes in the forested, Protection Zone of the Highlands Preservation Area, **from 88 acres to 23 acres. Only 31 comments were in favor** (for comparison, in response to rollbacks proposed for **Water Quality Management Planning** and **Flood Hazard Area** rules—both major regulatory programs—DEP received 300 and 196 comments respectively). Despite the overwhelming public response against this rule proposal, **DEP turned a deaf ear and adopted the rule changes earlier this month.**

Having ignored the public, **DEP now faces the Legislature**, which is exercising a rarely used Constitutional provision that balances powers between the Executive and Legislative branches.

Let your Senator know that you support SCR-148, the Senate Concurrent Resolution that determines that the amended septic density standards in DEP's Highlands Rules are **inconsistent with legislative intent**, that you oppose increasing development density in the forest that naturally and at no cost produces **30% of New Jersey's drinking water**, and will continue to provide clean drinking water for generations to come only if it remains undisturbed and development remains strictly regulated.

Please take 5 minutes, call **anytime tonight** and leave a message with your Senator to vote in favor of SCR-148. **Find your Senator's District Office phone number here.**



Thank you!

5.4 About the New Jersey Highlands Coalition

We represent a diverse network of organizations - small and large, local, regional, statewide and national - and individuals with the common goal to protect, enhance and restore the New Jersey Highlands and to preserve the quality and quantity of drinking water both for the 850,000 people in the Highlands as well as the more than 5.4 million people in Northern and Central New Jersey who depend on Highlands water. For more information visit our website: www.njhighlandscalition.org

Thank you for all of your support!

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