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Red Tape reviews hurt New Jersey

By [Letters to the Editor/The Star-Ledger](#)

May 04, 2010, 5:21AM



Lt Gov Kim Guadagno, left, and Sen. Barbara Buono listen to Mark J. Stanton, manager of the Division of Administrative Rules for the State of New Jersey, during the "Red Tape" session to reform the state's administrative rule-making process held at Rowan University in Glassboro last month.

Highlands need protection

The Red Tape Review Group seems to ignore the fundamental reason for environmental regulations: to protect our vital natural resources ("Group: Red Tape Review threatens Highlands," April 23).

The tired argument that environmental regulations "stifle economic growth" has been used to allow inappropriate development which despoils or exhausts dwindling resources and destroys the quality of life in our communities, the real factor hurting economic growth. Pinelands protection was opposed as being bad for that region's economy yet, more than 20 years later, the economy within that protected area has flourished far more than that of the surrounding, unprotected areas. The lesson: Wise land use and protection of natural resources prevents ill-conceived, profit-driven development whose legacy is ever-escalating taxes to mitigate degraded or depleted natural resources. If we scuttle regulations, we face costs of remediating newly polluted water supplies or paying for more distant water sources because we've used up our own.

Do we really buy into that tired, shortsighted argument of "economic growth" that allows developers' profits to trump long-term economic stability and welfare of our citizens? These are the real tradeoffs here and we urge Gov. Chris Christie to stand by his stated commitment to protect the water and other natural resources of the state.

Lynn L. Siebert, Morristown

Regulations are needed

If I were to propose a dense residential complex in a rural community, I'd wince at the "red tape" confronting me. I would need to determine if the legal costs to overcome the mountains of red tape would justify the risk of denial or being forced to reduce the scope of my proposal.

The community, however, wouldn't view my hurdles as red tape. The regulations are the protections that maintain their quality of life, the quality of the water they drink and their identity as a community.

Those who would consider regulations that protect our environmental and water resources to be red tape will be buoyed by the recommendations to Gov. Chris Christie by his Red Tape Review Group. In this recent report, lumped among unnecessary, duplicative and obsolete rules and procedures are necessary regulations that offer protection from profiteers who would otherwise spoil our sources of clean water, clean air and the longterm viability of our communities.

"The state must achieve a better balance between protecting the public and nurturing free enterprise," the report states ambiguously. To some, and possibly the governor, the balance sought is the wholesale deregulation of enterprise at the expense of the public well-being.

Laura Oltman, Phillipsburg