



July 22, 2011

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Highlands Council,

As organizations committed to a sustainable future for New Jersey through sound land-use planning, we write to encourage your favorable consideration of the five municipal petitions for plan conformance due to come before you on Aug. 3.

As you know, each of the five municipalities that are seeking plan conformance – Alpha Borough, Hackettstown, Oxford Township, Pohatcong Township and Wharton Borough – lies wholly or partly in the Planning Area. In addition to making their land use plans and regulations conform to the Regional Master Plan, each municipality seeks center designation to facilitate sustainable economic growth, development and redevelopment in appropriate locations.

The staff has reviewed the petitions according to the council's Plan Conformance Guidelines and recommends Highlands Council approval with conditions. We believe that the petitions represent an important opportunity to advance the goals of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act. The process of "plan conformance" is the key vehicle for implementing the Highlands Regional Master Plan, through changes to local master plans and associated development ordinances. It is as important in the Planning Area, where conformance is voluntary and there are no underlying DEP regulations governing development, as it is in the Preservation Area.

With your approval, the Highlands Council can provide technical and financial assistance for these municipalities as they work to implement the Regional Master Plan within their boundaries. Your support will help ensure the proper balance of environmental protection and responsible growth necessary for the long-term health of the Highlands region and New Jersey.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact [Peter Kasabach](#) by email or 609-393-0008, x104.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Freudenberg".

Robert Freudenberg
Regional Plan Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Kasabach".

Peter Kasabach
New Jersey Future

Cc:

Chief of Staff Richard Bagger, Governor's Office

Authorities Unit Director Deborah Gramiccioni, Governor's Office

Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Planning Wayne Hasenbalg, Governor's Office

Commissioner Bob Martin, Department of Environmental Protection