



## ***New Jersey Pinelands Commission***

# **PRESS RELEASE**

September 26, 2022

Contact: Paul Leakan, NJ Pinelands Commission

Phone: (609) 894-7300, ext. 124

E-mail: [info@pinelands.nj.gov](mailto:info@pinelands.nj.gov)

### **For Immediate Release:**

## **Pinelands Commission Mourns the Loss of former Gov. James J. Florio, who served as the agency's Chairman from 2002-2005**

NEW LISBON, N.J. September 26, 2022 – The New Jersey Pinelands Commission is mourning the loss of former Governor James J. Florio, who helped to craft legislation to protect the Pinelands and served as the Commission's Chairman from 2002-2005. Mr. Florio passed away on September 25<sup>th</sup>, at the age of 85.

"We are deeply saddened by the passing of Governor Florio," said Susan R. Grogan, Acting Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. "As the Commission's Chairman, he had great admiration and respect for the work of our staff, and the feeling was certainly mutual. Governor Florio also cared greatly about the preservation of the Pinelands. This region has been protected for more than four decades and will continue to be safeguarded for future generations, thanks in large part to Governor Florio."

Mr. Florio served as Governor of the State of New Jersey from 1990-1994, as a member of the U.S. Congress from 1974 to 1990, and as State Assemblyman from 1969- 1974. He was a strong proponent of Pinelands protection, authoring and steering the passage of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, which established the Pinelands National Reserve and set the stage for the adoption of the New Jersey Pinelands Protection Act.

"He was committed to protecting the Pinelands. During his tenure as Chair, I found him to be a thoughtful, dedicated and most importantly, effective leader of the Commission," said Alan W. Avery, Jr., who is the Commission's Vice Chairman and served on the Commission with Florio.

"Governor Florio was a dedicated public servant, a champion of Pinelands protection and of New Jersey's environment," said Commissioner Ed Lloyd, who also served on the Commission with Florio. "He sponsored the federal legislation creating the Pinelands reserve and served as Chairman of the Pinelands Commission for three years. The successful protection of the nearly one-million-acre Pinelands Area stands as a lasting tribute to his dedication to the State's precious environmental resources."

"I am saddened by the tremendous loss of Governor Florio," said Laura E. Matos, who was appointed Chair of the Commission in January 2022. "I was proud to serve as an intern in his office when I was in high school, and I am even more proud to help preserve his legacy as Chair of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, working to preserve, protect and enhance the natural

and cultural resources of the region. This work is meaningful and necessary and is as important today as it was the day he created the Pinelands National Reserve as a member of Congress.”

The Pinelands Commission is an independent state agency that is charged with protecting the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the 938,000-acre state Pinelands Area, which includes parts of 53 municipalities in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Ocean counties. The Commission is governed by a 15-member board of directors. The board consists of seven members who are appointed by the New Jersey Governor, one member appointed by each of the seven Pinelands counties, and one member appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. The agency’s Chair is appointed by the Governor. Members of the board are unpaid volunteers who devote a significant amount of their personal time and expertise while attending monthly meetings and serving on the Commission.

**\*\*\* ATTENTION REPORTERS/EDITORS:** Please contact Paul Leakan at [Info@pinelands.nj.gov](mailto:Info@pinelands.nj.gov) to receive photos of Governor Florio, including the photos below.



**Above:** (left to right) Former Pinelands Commission Chairs Franklin Parker, Betty Wilson, James Florio, and Richard J. Sullivan gathered for the 25th anniversary celebration of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan on September 28, 2006. Mr. Florio served as the Commission’s Chairman from 2002-2005.



**Above** (Left to right): Former Pinelands Commission Chairman James Florio presiding over a Commission meeting alongside Commission Vice Chairman Alan W. Avery, Jr. in 2002.

####