

COUNTY OF MORRIS
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF PLANNING

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Director

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973-829-8120

FAX 973-826-9025

cmarion@co.morris.nj.us

January 11, 2013

Edward J. McKenna, Jr., Chair
New Jersey State Planning Commission
New Jersey Department of State
225 West State Street
P.O. Box 820
Trenton, NJ 08625-0820

RE: Township of Mount Olive (Morris County) State Plan Policy Map Amendments

Dear Chairman McKenna:

I am writing on behalf of the Morris County Planning Board to express support for the amendments to the State Plan Policy Map for the Township of Mount Olive to be considered by the State Planning Commission on January 16, 2013. These amendments are consistent with the map amendments requested by the Morris County Planning Board on behalf of the Township of Mount Olive during the 2006-2007 cross-acceptance process. The basis for this support remains unchanged; therefore, the Morris County Planning Board requests that the State Planning Commission approve Resolution No. 2013-3 and Resolution No. 2013-4 identified on the State Planning Commission agenda of January 16, 2013 for the map amendments requested by the Township of Mount Olive.

Sincerely,

Christine G. Marion, PP/AICP
Planning Director

cc: Morris County Planning Board
Honorable Rob Greenbaum, Mayor, Mt. Olive
Sean Canning, Mt. Olive Administrator
Deena Leary, Director, Morris County Planning & Development
Gerard Scharfenberger, Director, OPA
Dan Kennedy, Deputy Director, OPA

**Brookwood Musconetcong River
Property Owners' Association, Inc.**

PO Box 797

Stanhope, New Jersey 07874

Telephone: (973) 347-1040

Fax: (973) 347-1767

Web: www.bmrpoa.homestead.com

Email: bmrpoa@verizon.net

**SUBJECT: MT. OLIVE TOWNSHIP PROPOSED PLANNING AREA AMENDMENT
FROM PLANNING AREA 5 TO PLANNING AREA 2**

Dear Mr. Scharfenberger:

The Brookwood Musconetcong River Property Owners' Association, Inc. (BMRPOA) received notice of the December 11, 2012 meeting because our property is within 200 feet of the proposed amendment area. I attended the December 11, 2012 meeting.

The community of West Brookwood consists of residential and commercial properties. Water service is provided by three (3) wells; one (1) located on Chestnut Street proximate to the Musconetcong River and two (2) located on River Road near the intersection with Waterloo Road. These three (3) wells service 420 properties and 5 commercial establishments.

Concerning the proposed amendment in the Planning Area (from a PA 5 to a PA 2), that is directly adjacent to our community, we have the following concerns: potential impacts to our water quality, water supply, capacity of the wells to provide current water supply and water quality, well heads, well drawdown, and well recharge areas; potential impacts to the Musconetcong River (a Federal Wild and Scenic River), its water quality, fish wildlife and adjacent habitat areas.

The proposed amendment from a Planning Area 5 to a Planning Area 2 would potentially result in additional development that could have serious impacts on the health and well-being of our community. We strongly oppose any change in this Planning Area that could seriously impact our Well Sites and our Community.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our concerns on this Planning Area amendment.

Barbara McLoughlin

BMRPOA, President

**TOWNSHIP OF BYRAM
NEW JERSEY**

**MAILING ADDRESS:
10 MANSFIELD DRIVE
STANHOPE, NJ 07874
Phone: 973-347-2500
Fax: 973-347-0502**



**WEBSITE ADDRESS:
www.byramtwp.org**

January 11, 2013

Gerald Scharfenberger, Ph.D.
Director, Office for Planning Advocacy
New Jersey Department of State
Office for Planning Advocacy
225 West State Street
P.O. Box 820
Trenton, NJ 08625-0820

Re: Proposed State Planning Zone change from PA5 to PA2 in Mt. Olive Township, Morris County at Interstate 80 and State Highway 206 (International Drive)

Dear Dr. Scharfenberger:

Please accept the comments outlined in the attached letter from the Byram Township Planning Board. These represent the general concerns of the Township.

Byram Township was not officially noticed of the public hearing and subsequent comment period for the Mt. Olive Proposed State Planning Area change, and therefore our Township Council was not able to reply by January 14.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 973-347-2500 x127.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Oscovitch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

James Oscovitch

TOWNSHIP OF BYRAM

NEW JERSEY

MAILING ADDRESS:
10 MANSFIELD DRIVE
STANHOPE, NJ 07874
Phone: 973-347-2500
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WEBSITE ADDRESS:
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January 11, 2013

Gerald Scharfenberger, Ph.D.
Director, Office for Planning Advocacy
New Jersey Department of State
Office for Planning Advocacy
225 West State Street
PO Box 820
Trenton, NJ 08625-0820

Re: Proposed State Planning Zone change from PA5 to PA2 in Mt. Olive Township, Morris County at Interstate 80 and State Highway 206 (International Drive)

Dr. Scharfenberger:

The Byram Township Planning Board would like to provide comment on the above referenced application of Mt. Olive Township before the State Planning Commission to change this area from Planning Area 5 to Planning Area 2.

We want to note that neither Byram Township nor Sussex County was notified about the public hearing on this matter. We learned of the hearing after the fact, from representatives of the Brookwood Musconetcong River Property Owners Association water company (BMRPOA), who were notified and attended the hearing. If the Township had been directly notified, we would have participated in those proceedings.

Please accept this letter as our initial comment on the proposal and also as a request for additional time and information in order to provide more substantive comments. Our Township Council was not able to review the information in time to respond.

Byram Township desires to understand the need for these changes and the reasons that prompted the request. Without more information about Mt. Olive Township's intentions for this sizable area and because of the limited time the Township has had to submit comments, the Township cannot support the proposed change for this area at this time. We question what can be accomplished or permitted by a change to a PA 2 that cannot be accomplished or permitted in the current PA 5.

The Byram Township Planning Board and Environmental Commission have reviewed the documentation provided to the public about the proposal to change the areas along International Drive from Planning Area 5 to Planning Area 2. Since these areas are close to one of our largest residential neighborhoods and to the public water supply wells for the BMRPOA water company

(serving Byram's West Brookwood neighborhood and some Route 206 businesses), we find it necessary to share our concerns regarding the impact of the proposed changes on our municipality. In addition to our over-arching concerns about water supply, we are also concerned about the inclusion of undeveloped parcels near the Musconetcong River and of historic sites within the proposed PA 2, about potential impacts on Critical and Significant habitat areas and potential impacts to the Musconetcong River itself, which forms Byram's border with Mt. Olive and Stanhope.

It is our understanding that Mt. Olive has conformed to the Highlands Regional Master Plan in the Preservation Area only and that they have not conformed in the Planning Area. The area in question is in the Planning Area and therefore is not under the jurisdiction of the Highlands Council. We have, however, attached a number of resource maps obtained from the Highlands Council site, since those maps are the most current and thorough now available.

It is also our understanding that Morris County has filed the WQMP mapping component of the Morris County Waste Water Management Plan, which is awaiting final approval from NJDEP, and that the State Planning Area Revision Boundary recommended by your office follows the Future Sewer Service Area in the WQMP, placing this area in the Future Sewer Service Area.

Specifically, the Township opposes the inclusion in PA 2 of the large forested piece north of the former BASF site (Block 301 Lot 4, 56.45 acres, bordering Allamuchy Mountain State Park that hugs the northern end of the proposed PA 2) and two undeveloped parcels along the Musconetcong River (Block 106 Lot 3, 15.39 acres, and Block 106 Lot 2, 9.156 acres). The historic route of the Morris Canal cuts across the center of the area (including across Block 106 Lot 3), and Byram's trail system links to the proposed greenway trail along this route.

We would like the State Planning Commission to note that the Musconetcong River is designated a Category-1 waterway and is classified as a trout production and trout maintenance stream. It is also a federal Wild and Scenic River. We note that the delineation criteria for Planning Area 5 from the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan states that areas surrounding C-1 waterways shall be designated Planning Area 5. Also of note, the mapping of ranked habitat in the area of the proposed planning area re-designation shows habitat areas that abut the Musconetcong River for species of Rank 2 (Special Concern) and Rank 4 (State Endangered).

Portions of the proposed PA 2 area are within the watershed of existing potable water supply wells for the West Brookwood Water Company, which serves 400 Byram residents, as well as some businesses. We note that the delineation criteria for a Planning Area 5 from the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan states that areas within the watershed of existing potable water supply wells shall be designated Planning Area 5. Large portions of the area proposed for redesignation, including some existing developed areas such as the BASF parcel, lie within the well head protection areas for the West Brookwood wells, including within the 5-year and 12-year well head protection tiers. Any further development that would occur within the wellhead protection area for these wells also occurs within a Highlands-designated water deficit area and Highlands designated critical recharge areas. Additional impervious

coverage would prevent any potential increases in water recharge in these areas and potentially impact these wells.

Our obvious concern is that additional or denser development within the proposed PA 2 area could have serious impacts on the West Brookwood wells and, in turn, potential health and financial impacts on the 400 homes and the businesses dependent on those wells.

Byram supports any assistance the State can offer to local municipalities to foster economic development through good planning. Byram is also a long-time supporter of good regional planning and of those goals within the State Plan and the Highlands Regional Master Plan. At this time, we believe we must withhold our support for Mt. Olive's request to change the International Drive area to a PA 2, because this large area on Byram's border could have enormous unknown impacts on Byram's future as well as the future of our immediate region.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



George Shivas
Planning Board Chairman

Cc: Byram Township Mayor and Council
Mt Olive Township Mayor and Council
Stanhope Borough Mayor and Council
New Jersey Highlands Coalition
Brookwood Musconetcong River Property Owners Association
New Jersey Highlands Council
Sussex County Planning Director
Morris County Planning Director
Barry Ableman, Office for Planning Advocacy

3-D Bird's Eye View Help Meta Highlands Development Credit Consistency Review



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Open Waters

Riparian

Topography

Critical Habitat

Preserved Open Space & Agricultural Lands

Preservation Priority

Geology

Water Capacity

Water Quality

Contaminated Sites

Water Supply

Public Community Water Systems (Existing Area Served)

Waste Water

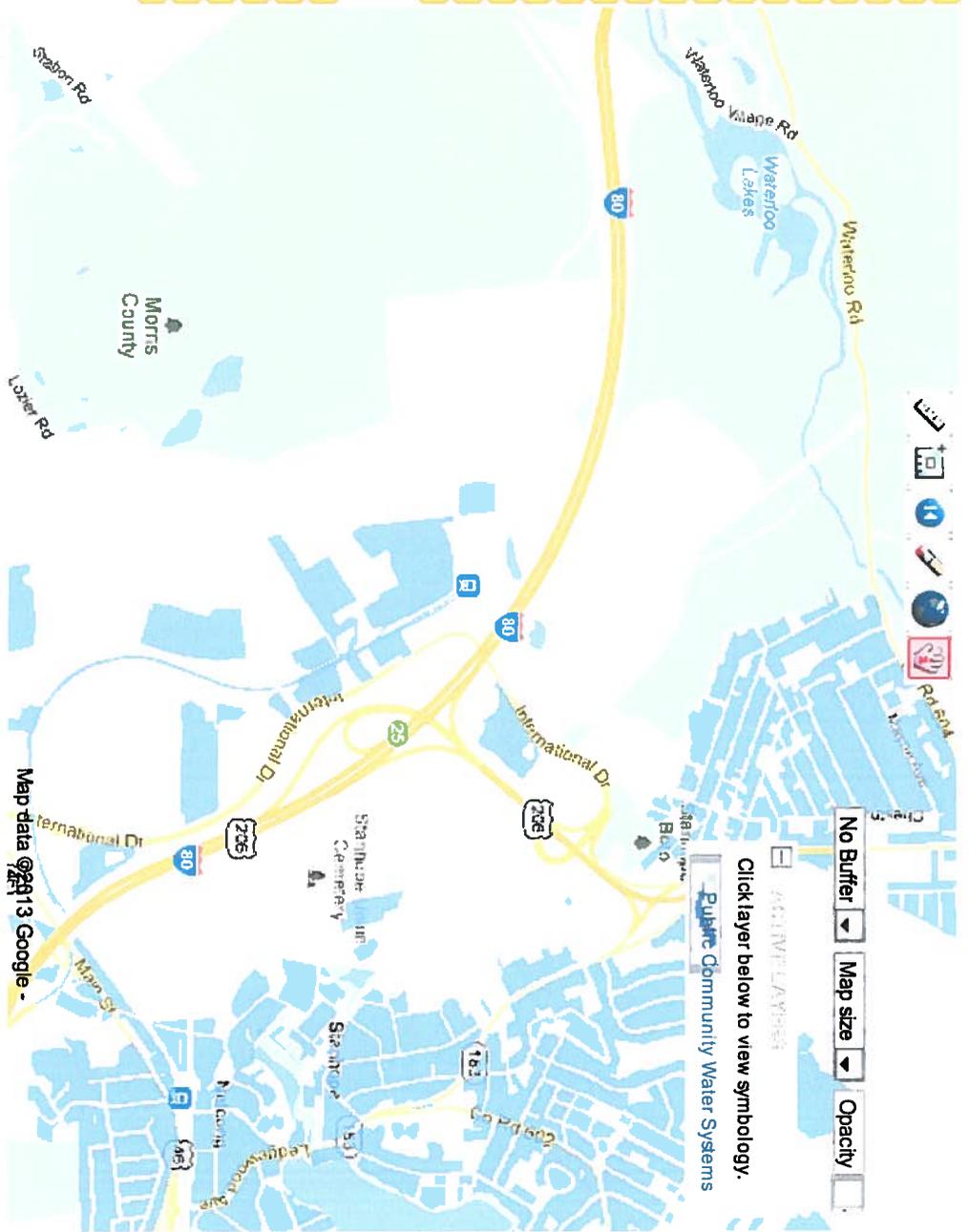
Agricultural Resources

Historical, Archaeological & Scenic Resources

Transportation & Transit Conditions

Transfer of Development Rights

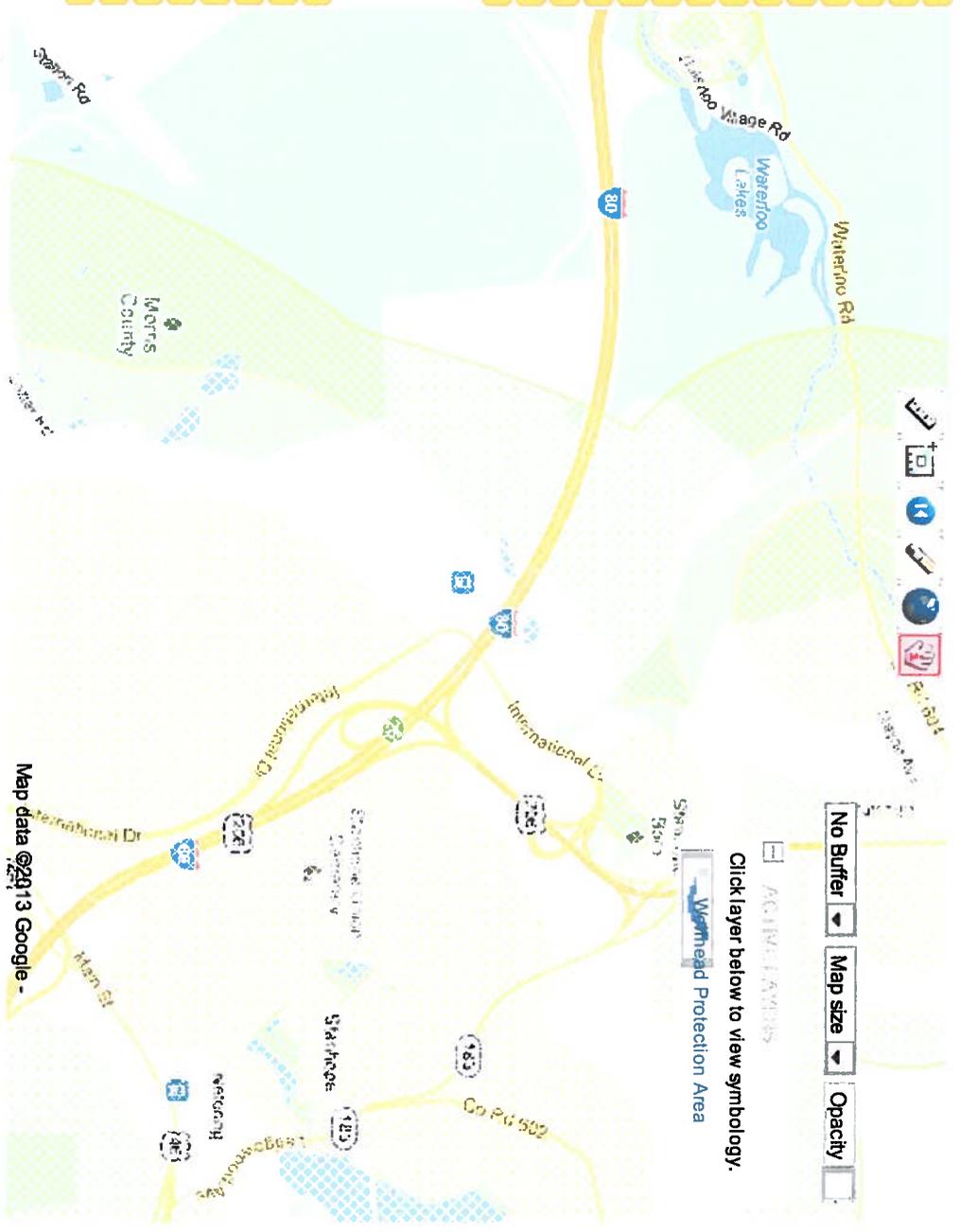
Zoning



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- Wellhead Protection Area
 - 2-Year Tier
 - 5-Year Tier
 - 12-Year Tier
- Prime Groundwater Recharge Area
- Lake Management Area
- Contaminated Sites
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Water Capacity

Water Quality

Wellhead Protection Area

2-Year Tier 5-Year Tier 12-Year Tier

Prime Groundwater Recharge Area

Lake Management Area

Contaminated Sites

Water Supply

Waste Water

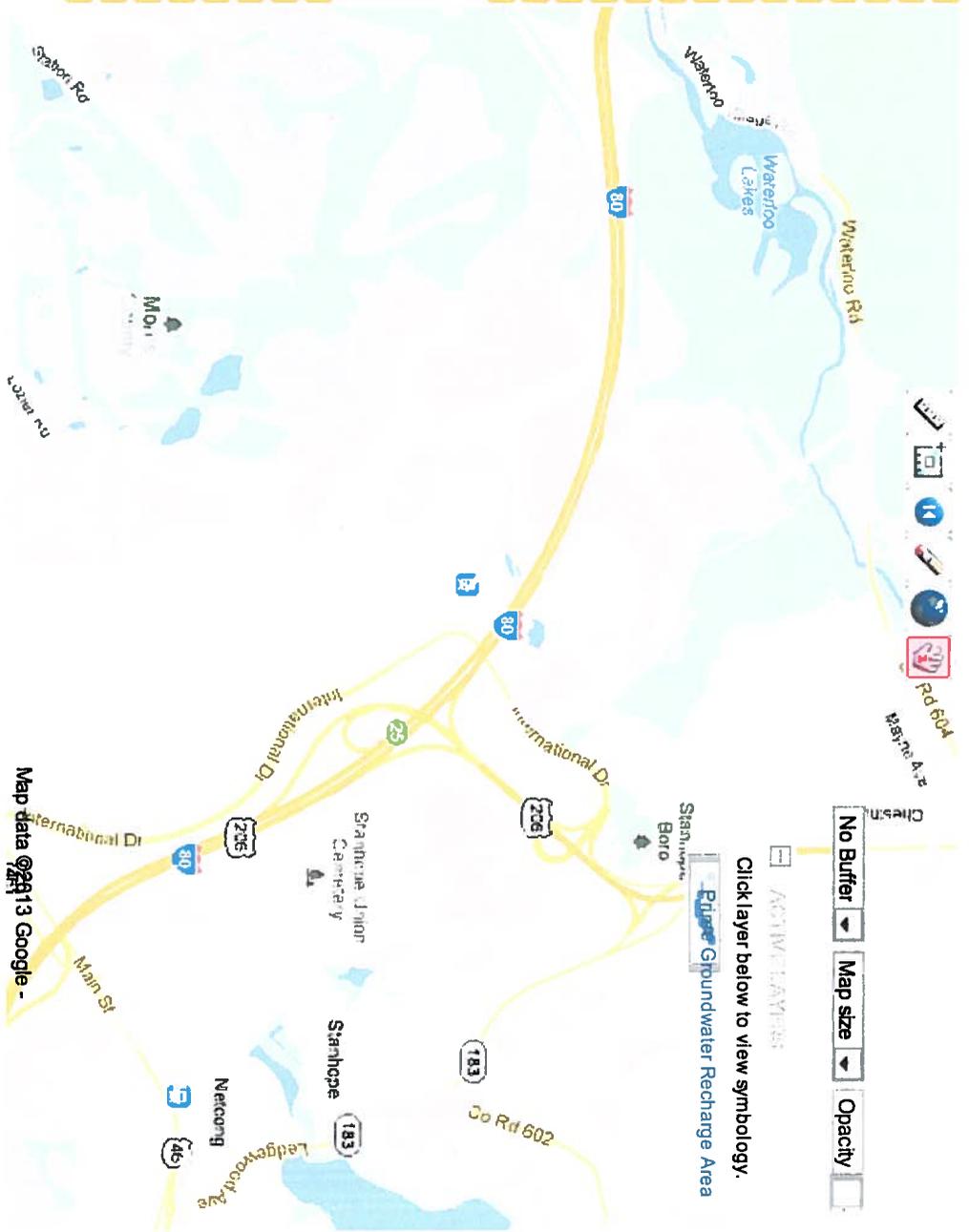
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Topography

Critical Habitat

Vernal Habitat within 1000ft

Significant Natural Area

Critical Wildlife Habitat

Preserved Open Space & Agricultural Lands

Preservation Priority

Geology

Water Capacity

Water Quality

Contaminated Sites

Water Supply

Waste Water

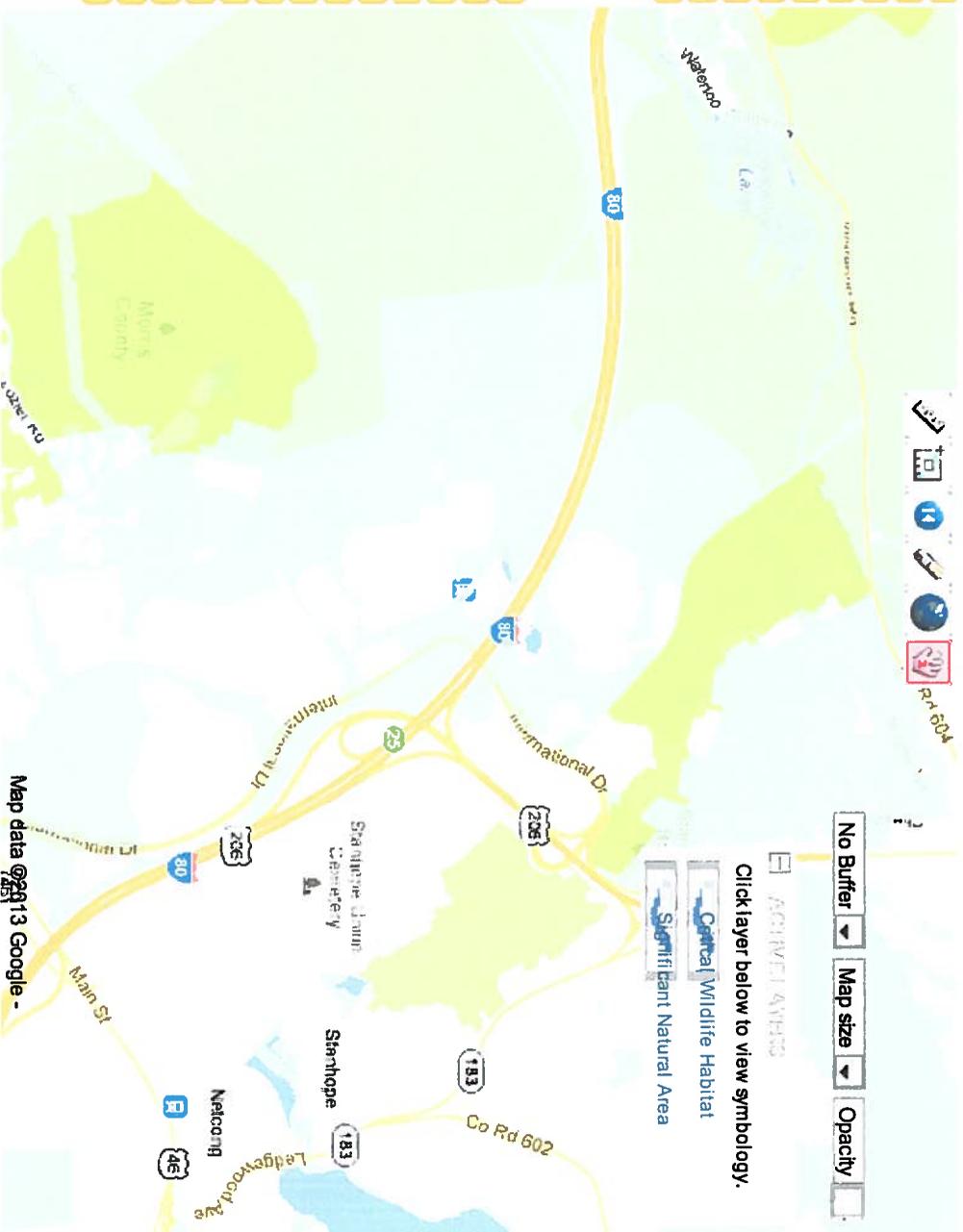
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Riparian

Riparian Corridor Integrity Score

HIGH MODERATE LOW

Flood Prone Areas

Alluvial Soils

Hydric Soils

Shallow Soils

(Depth to Water Table Less Than 45cm)

Wildlife Corridor

Topography

Critical Habitat

Preserved Open Space & Agricultural Lands

Preservation Priority

Geology

Water Capacity

Water Quality

Contaminated Sites

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Streams

Lakes & Ponds

Wetlands

Open Water Protection Area

HUC14 Subwatersheds

Watershed Values

HIGH MODERATE LOW

Riparian

Topography

Critical Habitat

Preserved Open Space & Agricultural Lands

Preservation Priority

Geology

Water Capacity

Water Quality

Contaminated Sites

Water Supply

Waste Water

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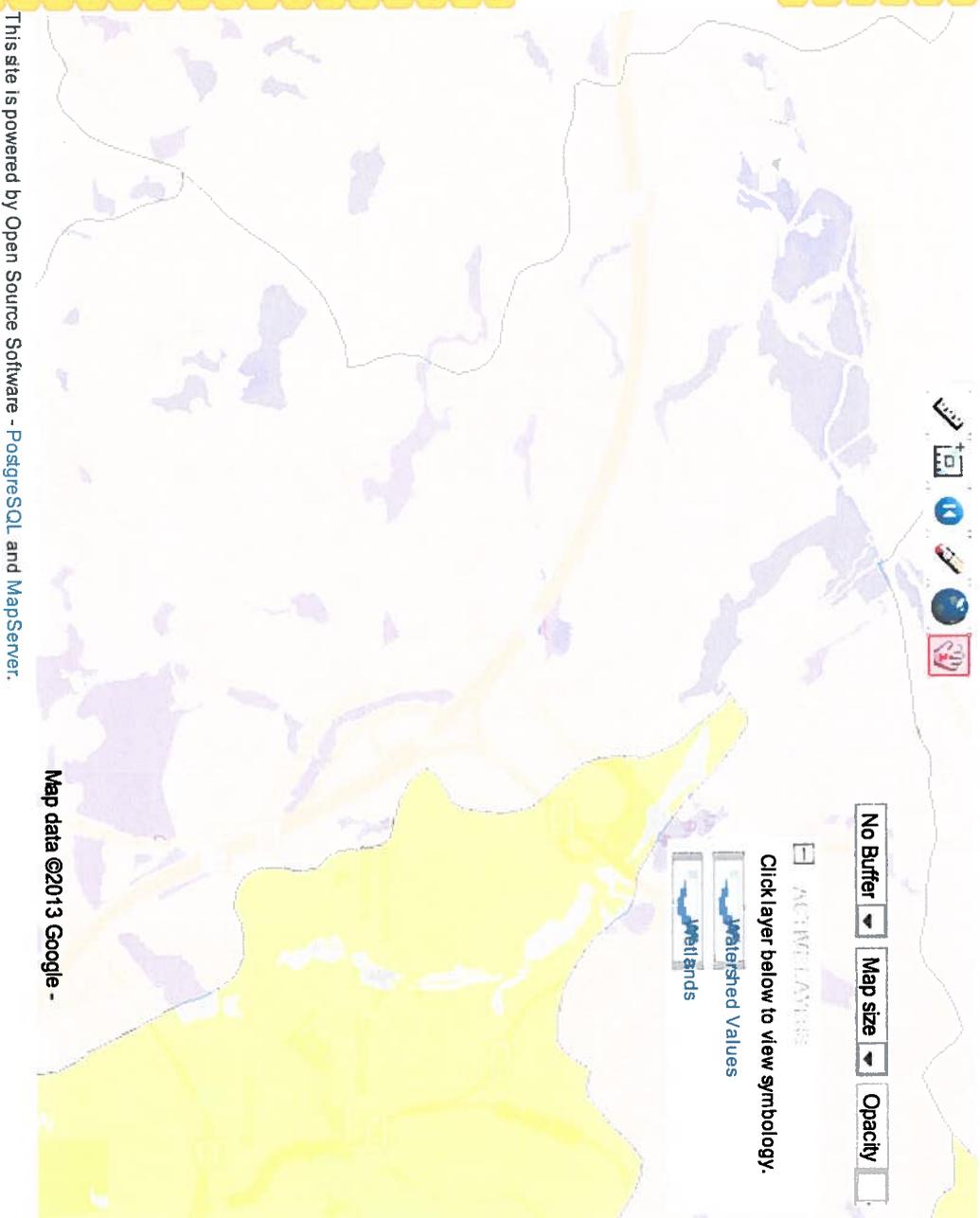
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ACTIVE LAYERS

Click layer below to view symbology.

Watershed Values

Wetlands



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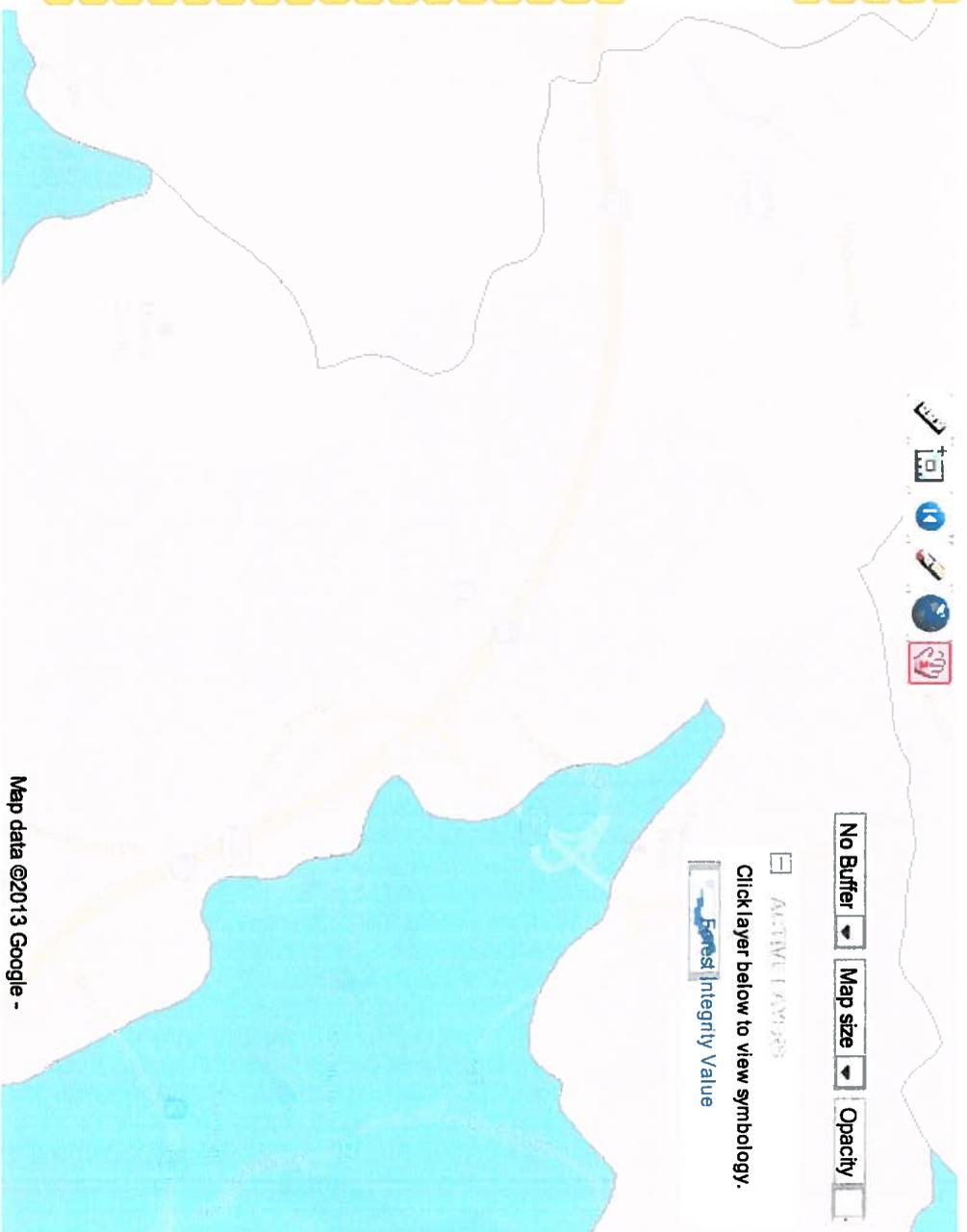
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- Forest Integrity Value
 - HIGH
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 - LOW
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Public Comment Opportunity Summary:

On Tuesday, December 11, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. a public hearing was held in the Mount Olive Township municipal court room at 204 Flanders-Drakestown Road, Budd Lake, NJ. Over 500 property Owners within 200 feet of the proposed map amendments were sent letters about the public hearing and an article about the I80 Map Amendment proposal appeared in the Mount Olive Chronicle prior to the meeting. Written public comment closed on January 14, 2013.

Approximately 60 people attended the public hearing on December 11th. OPA Staff gave a general overview of the process and provided additional specifics about both proposed amendments.

Most people who spoke at the meeting asked questions regarding definitions of Planning Areas, who initiated this proposal and others were concerned about higher taxes, water supply, flooding and well protection.

Stated Reasons for General Support:

- 80% of the Township is in the Highlands Preservation Area
- Need for economic growth for the remaining 20% in Highlands Planning Area
- Existing master plan and approvals
- Existing infrastructure
- Capacity for growth
- 383,000 gallons per day excess sewerage capacity
- In the county WQMP

Stated Reasons for Opposing:

- The undeveloped property (Block 301, Lot 4) is forested of high importance
- High groundwater recharge area
- Need to protect wells
- Change would be in conflict with the Highland Regional Plan
- The proposed State Strategic Plan would see this area as a targeted preservation area
- Undeveloped property functions as an extension of the park
- Open space trust fund targeted the property for acquisition.
- Need to protect Morris Canal historic district

Stated Reasons for General Support with modification:

- Need for economic growth
- Placing CES and HCS on the map would protect important environmental and historic resources

Written comments:

Most written comments came via an online survey that generated an e-mail to our office.

To:

Edward J. McKenna, Jr., Chair, New Jersey State Planning Commission
Gerard.Scharfenberger, Acting Director, Office of Planning Advocacy

We oppose the State Plan Policy Map Amendments proposed in Mt. Olive, Morris County, to change 413 acres in the Foreign Trade Zone from Planning Area-5 to Planning Area-2; and to change 396.5 acres in the vicinity of Pleasant Hill and Bartley roads from Planning Area-5 to Planning Area-1, as originally proposed on September 12, 2012 and discussed at the State Planning Commission hearing in Mt. Olive on December 11, 2012. These proposed changes are inconsistent with the known and valuable environmental and cultural resources of these locations, they will significantly degrade these resources and will adversely impact the character of our communities. We acknowledge that more defined portions of these areas could be redesignated without impairing environmental quality, but the wholesale-scale redesignations as proposed are contrary to the goals of the State Planning Commission and the State Planning Act.

More than 750 people signed a petition set up by the Highlands Coalition which auto-generated an e-mail stating opposition to the two amendments as written, while accepting that there are areas where the Planning Area could be changed without impairing environmental quality. Note that about half of the e-mails deviated from the standard text with one line statements that were not in support of the proposed amendment.

Letters were sent by the Borough of Stanhope's engineer and the Brookwood Musconetcong River Property Owners' Association, Inc. (BMRPOA). Both were concerned that their wells might be negatively impacted by development that may occur after the Planning Area change. While Stanhope's letter requested that their three wells should be noted on the map with a CES, the BMRPOA letter raised additional concerns. The Township of Byram sent a letter outlining general concerns and asking for more time to review the proposed amendment.



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STANLEY T. OMLAND, PE, PP, LEED AP
ERIC L. KELLER, PE, PP, LEED AP
WILLIAM H. HAMILTON, PP, AICP, LLA, LEED AP
CHARLES THOMAS, JR, PE, PP, LEED AP

THEODORE D. CASSERA, PE, PP
GEOFFREY R. LANZA, PE, PP, LEED AP
MICHAEL J. SPILLANE, PE, PP

KEVIN P. BOLLINGER, PLS
JENNIFER CADWALLADER, LLA, PP
WAYNE A. CORSEY, PE, PP
SEAN A. DELANY, PE, PP
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ANTHONY FACCHINO, PE, PP
KIERSTEN M. OSTERKORN, PE
FRANK RUSSO, III, PE, PP
JAMES R. WOODS, PE

January 9, 2013

VIA EMAIL AND REGULAR MAIL

Mr. Gerry Scharfenberger, Ph.D., Director
Office for Planning Advocacy
Department of State
State of New Jersey
P.O. Box 820
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0820

**RE: Proposed Map Amendment
Change from PA-5 to PA-2
Township of Mount Olive
Borough of Stanhope Comments
OEA File No. STB001**

Dear Dr. Scharfenberger:

These written comments are on behalf of the Borough of Stanhope in our capacity as the Municipal Engineer. We attended the public hearing on this proposed map amendment held on December 11, 2012 and listened to the presentation by members of your staff and the questions from the public. We also asked questions of your staff and the proposal. This proposed area is generally bounded by Interstate 80 to the south, the Musconetcong River to the north, Love Lane to the east and the former BASF headquarters to the west.

The Borough of Stanhope's primary interest and concern with respect to this map amendment are that two of our municipal wells are located within the designated map amendment area and a third well is located immediately across the Musconetcong River. These three wells represent 90 percent of the production of the entire Stanhope municipal water system and therefore are critical to delivering safe drinking water to the residents and businesses of the Borough.

This proposed map amendment must be weighed within the context of the overall State Plan document and given the context of the boundaries of the lands included within this proposed area. The goals of the State Plan which are relevant to this proposed amendment area include the following:

- Goal #2 – Conserve the State’s Natural Resources and Systems
- Goal #4 – Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution
- Goal #5 – Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost

Any decision regarding the appropriateness of the designated Planning Area for this area cannot be made without careful and thorough consideration of not only the Stanhope Borough wells in this area but also other community and private wells which serve the majority of the population in this area. These wells serve a population of over 4,000 residents and businesses in the Borough and adjacent Byram Township. The two-year wellhead protection area encompasses approximately 45 percent of the entire proposed map amendment area (approximately 95% of the portion east of Route 206) and the five-year wellhead protection area encompasses 80 percent of the entire proposed map amendment area (and all of the area east of Route 206).

The properties comprising the proposed map amendment area are also located along the Musconetcong River and through which the remnants of the Morris Canal extend. The State already owns lands along the northerly side of the River, including a portion of the Morris Canal, in Stanhope and there are also other preserved open space parcels along this segment of the River. The Stanhope Union Cemetery, a cultural site, is also located within this area between Love Lane/Continental Drive and Interstate 80. This cemetery dates to at least the late 1800’s with a number of grave sites of Civil War veterans.

The roadway system serving the portion of the proposed map amendment area east of Route 206 is limited with Love Lane/Continental Drive extending between International Drive North and Route 46 Westbound; and Waterloo Road extending into a low-density residential area of Stanhope. The existing bridge on Waterloo Road over the Musconetcong Bridge is weight restricted to only 4 tons further limiting access into this area.

Development activity within this area could have a negative impact on the quality of water drawn from the Borough wells and other wells in the area, particularly given that the parcels immediately adjacent to the Borough’s wells are within the most critical wellhead protection area. Negative impacts on the Borough wells could result in increased costs of water treatment to continue to meet ever more stringent water quality standards. In an extreme case, the Borough may need to seek new well sites which will be prohibitively expensive and possibly unsuccessful given the small size of the Borough and limited land resources. Therefore, protection of the wellhead areas of the Borough wells is critical to their continued viability and water quality. For these reasons, the Borough is not in favor of the proposed map amendment changing the subject area from Planning Area 5 to Planning Area 2, at least for the area east of Route 206.

However, should the Office for Planning Advocacy determine that the proposed map amendment is to be recommended to the State Planning Commission, the Borough of Stanhope requests that the three Borough wells and the associated wellhead protection areas located in or adjacent to the subject area be designated as critical environmental sites. The State Plan identifies wellfields and wellhead protection areas as appropriate features to be mapped as Critical Environmental Sites.

Dr. Gerry Scharfenberger. Ph.D.
Proposed Map Amendment
Borough of Stanhope Comments
OEA File No. STB001
January 9, 2013
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This designation means that the site(s) are of local, regional or statewide significance and that its protection and enhancement is of primary importance. The Borough certainly concurs and must emphasize that these areas are crucial to the viability of the Borough's water system.

While the Borough wishes to be on the record as not in favor of the map amendment for that portion of the area east of Route 206, if the Office of Planning Advocacy and State Planning Commission determine otherwise, the Borough requests, at a minimum, that the wells and the wellhead protection areas be designated as Critical Environmental Sites concurrently with the map amendment process.

Should you have any questions or require additional information in this matter please do not hesitate to contact either our office or the Borough Administrator, Brian McNeilly (973-347-0159 x-14).

Very truly yours,
OMLAND ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES, INC.



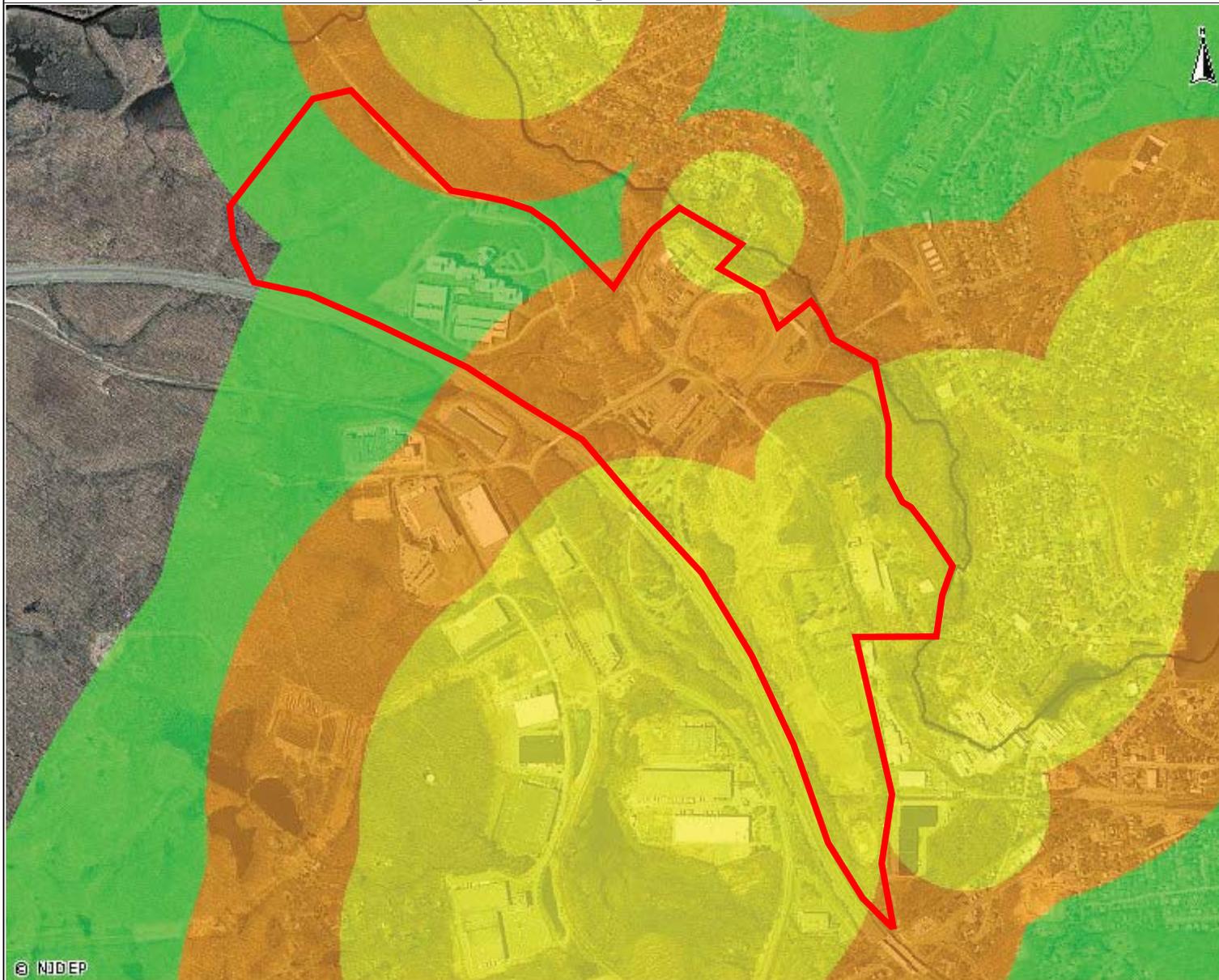
Eric L. Keller, P.E., P.P., LEED AP
Borough Engineer
ekeller@omland.com

w/ enc.

Cc: Mayor R. Maio and Borough Councilmembers
Brian McNeilly, Borough Administrator
Ellen Horak, Borough Clerk
Richard Stein, Esq., Borough Attorney
Senator Steven Oroho
Assemblywoman Alison McHose
Assemblyman Gary Chiusano

Exhibit A

Borough of Stanhope Wellhead Protection



Legend

Environmental Data

- Counties
- Well Head Protection Areas (Community)
 - Tier 1: 2-Year
 - Tier 2: 5-Year
 - Tier 3: 12-Year
- Well Head Protection Areas (Non-Community)
 - Tier 1: 2-Year
 - Tier 2: 5-Year
 - Tier 3: 12-Year
- Mid-Atlantic States
 - New Jersey
 - Other Mid-Atlantic States

Natural2007

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Map Printed On {2013-01-07 07:41}

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TOWNSHIP OF MOUNT OLIVE

Office of the Mayor
ROBERT GREENBAUM

January 11, 2013

Dr. Gerard Scharfenberger, PhD.
New Jersey State Planning Commission
Office for Planning Advocacy
Department of State
225 W. State Street
P.O. Box 820
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0820

Re: Mount Olive Township, Morris County
State Plan Policy Map Corrections

Dear Dr. Scharfenberger:

As Mayor of the Township of Mount Olive in Morris County, I fully support the proposed map corrections to modify a section in the International Trade Center/Foreign Trade Zone from Planning Area 5 to Planning Area 2 and to revise a portion in Flanders from Planning Area 5 to Planning Area 1. Both areas are significantly developed and are served by public water and sanitary sewerage facilities. The proposed PA2 designation will provide a far better fit for the existing and ultimate build-out of the ITC/FTZ consistent with the new State Strategic Plan's policy of recognizing foreign trade zones as Priority Growth Area. In Flanders, the change to PA1 is certainly a more accurate depiction as applied to the existing residential neighborhoods and the office and retail development that are situated on or in proximity to U.S. Highway 206.

With 80 percent of our Township now restricted under the Highlands Preservation Area designation, it is imperative that we have in place a sensible economic development posture for the remaining 20 percent in the Planning Area. The proposed State Plan Policy Map corrections support this effort. I am aware that some opposition has been expressed fueled by charges that the State Planning Commission and Mount Olive are indifferent to the impact upon our environment. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Mount Olive has actively supported the acquisition of open space such that, when supplemented with State parklands, results in 6,957 preserved acres comprising 35 percent of the total land area in Mount Olive. We take great pride in the precious environmental resources within our municipal borders and employ an array of land use tools such as wellhead protection measures, exacting tree protection and replacement requirements, controls to limit disturbance to steep slopes and natural features, surface water management provisions and stream corridor buffer standards to ensure sensible, sensitive, and sustainable development.



TOWNSHIP OF MOUNT OLIVE

Office of the Mayor
ROBERT GREENBAUM

The proposed map corrections are entirely consistent with the goals established for the Highlands Planning Area as set forth in the *Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act*, particularly No. 9 which reads as follows:

Encourage, consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and smart growth strategies and principles, appropriate patterns of compatible residential, commercial, and industrial development, redevelopment, and economic growth, in or adjacent to areas already utilized for such purposes, and discourage piecemeal, scattered, and inappropriate development, in order to accommodate local and regional growth and economic development in an orderly way while protecting the Highlands environment from the individual and cumulative adverse impacts thereof...

Our desire to see the map changes implemented date back to the Cross Acceptance process thus I am very encouraged to have reached this point thanks to you and your very capable staff. I trust the State Planning Commission will support our efforts to plan wisely for our community and adopt the map changes.

Sincerely,



Robert Greenbaum
Mayor

/cm

cc: Sean Canning, Business Administrator
Catherine Natafalusy, Planning Administrator
Senator Steven Oroho
Assemblywoman Alison Littell McHose
Assemblyman Gary R. Chiusano



Musconetcong Watershed Association

Edward J. McKenna, Jr.
Chair, New Jersey State Planning Commission

January 11, 2013

Dear Mr. McKenna,

The Musconetcong Watershed Association opposes the re-designation of 413 acres in Mt. Olive from PA5 to PA2. Although portions of the property contain disturbed areas that may be appropriate for redevelopment, much of this tract consists of environmentally sensitive areas that should remain protected.

The Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA) is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and improving the quality of the Musconetcong River and its Watershed, including its natural and cultural resources. The area being proposed for re-designation falls within our watershed, and we are concerned that valuable resources will be vulnerable if the proposed map adjustments are made.

There are numerous reasons to protect portions of this property. There is a 65 acre tract of forested lands that is currently habitat for threatened and endangered species that would be susceptible to destruction with this change. The Morris Canal running through the property is a historic resource that is deserving of protection. Several sections of the property have been identified as Prime Groundwater Recharge Areas by the Highlands Council. Since the property is largely surrounded by Allamuchy State Park, a PA2 designation for the entire tract would be completely inappropriate in this park setting.

The Musconetcong River's "outstandingly remarkable river-related resources" qualified the river as being eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Federal designation of the Musconetcong River as 'Wild and Scenic' was achieved in December 2006. We object to the additional degradation to the river and its tributaries that run through the parcel that would occur with this re-designation.

Sincerely,
Cinny MacGonagle
MWA Vice-president

cc: Gerard.Scharfenberger
Acting Director, Office of Planning Advocacy

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NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COALITION

508 Main Street
Boonton, NJ 07005
(973) 588-7190

New Jersey State Planning Commission
Trenton, New Jersey
electronically filed to: osg_ed@sos.state.nj.us

January 11, 2013

Re: Comments on the proposed Map Amendments concerning 413 acres in Mt. Olive Township, Morris County

In the final draft State Strategic Plan the preservation of New Jersey's critical resources is not only equal in priority to promoting economic growth, the Plan recognizes that protecting our natural resources is an essential element of a vibrant economy and as such, designates the protection of natural resources as one of the four main investment goals of the State Plan.

If the State Planning Commission seeks to faithfully adhere to its own stated goals, if it is to implement the State Strategic Plan honestly and with credibility, the Commission cannot ignore the presence of verified critical natural resources when contemplating planning area policy changes, or apply policies that would place our critical resources at risk.

The 413 acre site in Mt. Olive includes portions that are developed, disturbed, or have limited resource value. The site also contains verified and inventoried critical natural and cultural resources. The Commission staff documentation in support of the proposed downgrade from the designation of environmentally sensitive either diminishes or ignores the presence of these known critical resources.

How does the State Planning Commission account for this omission? Can the Commission designate planning policies suitable for sites with low or impaired resource values to sites where high value natural resources are present? Is it that the Commission determines where we will have natural resources and where we won't? Does the intended planning policy determine whether or not a site's natural resources will be recognized as present?

In the documentation that attempts to justify the proposed map amendment, it omits any discussion of the 65 acres of undisturbed upland forest surrounded by a forested area of Allamuchy State Park. There are no references to the wellhead protection areas, the prime groundwater recharge areas, the presence of wood turtles, or the extant features of the State and federally listed Morris Canal. All of these known critical resources are inventoried and mapped by the Department of Environmental Protection, the Highlands Council, and even in the 2007 Mt. Olive Natural Resources Inventory. In fact the Mt. Olive NRI categorizes parts of the site as having the highest level of environmental resource value in the township.

Good planning takes on the difficult and important challenge of balancing economic growth and development with natural resource protection. The proposed map adjustment fails to attempt this balance.

The new State Strategic Plan, with little resemblance to the impenetrable policy encyclopedia of past plans, offers not much more than clear statement of estimable goals, high standards, common sense and transparency. The State Planning Commission under the new Plan determines the criteria that align the spectrum of State agencies towards investing agency resources so that good planning outcomes are encouraged. Protecting the natural resources of the State, as the State Strategic Plan clearly recognizes, is essential to our economic health.

The State Planning Commission has no regulatory authority. It doesn't approve or deny development proposals and the municipality is free to be guided or not by the Commission's recommendations. The role of the Commission is to encourage. So it becomes very difficult to understand why the Commission doesn't encourage the very best planning.

You cannot encourage good planning and you cannot maintain a vibrant economy if you fail to protect our natural resources. But the very first step is to stop ignoring them. Maintaining the PA-5 designation for the portions of the site that are environmentally sensitive and culturally significant is a step in that direction.

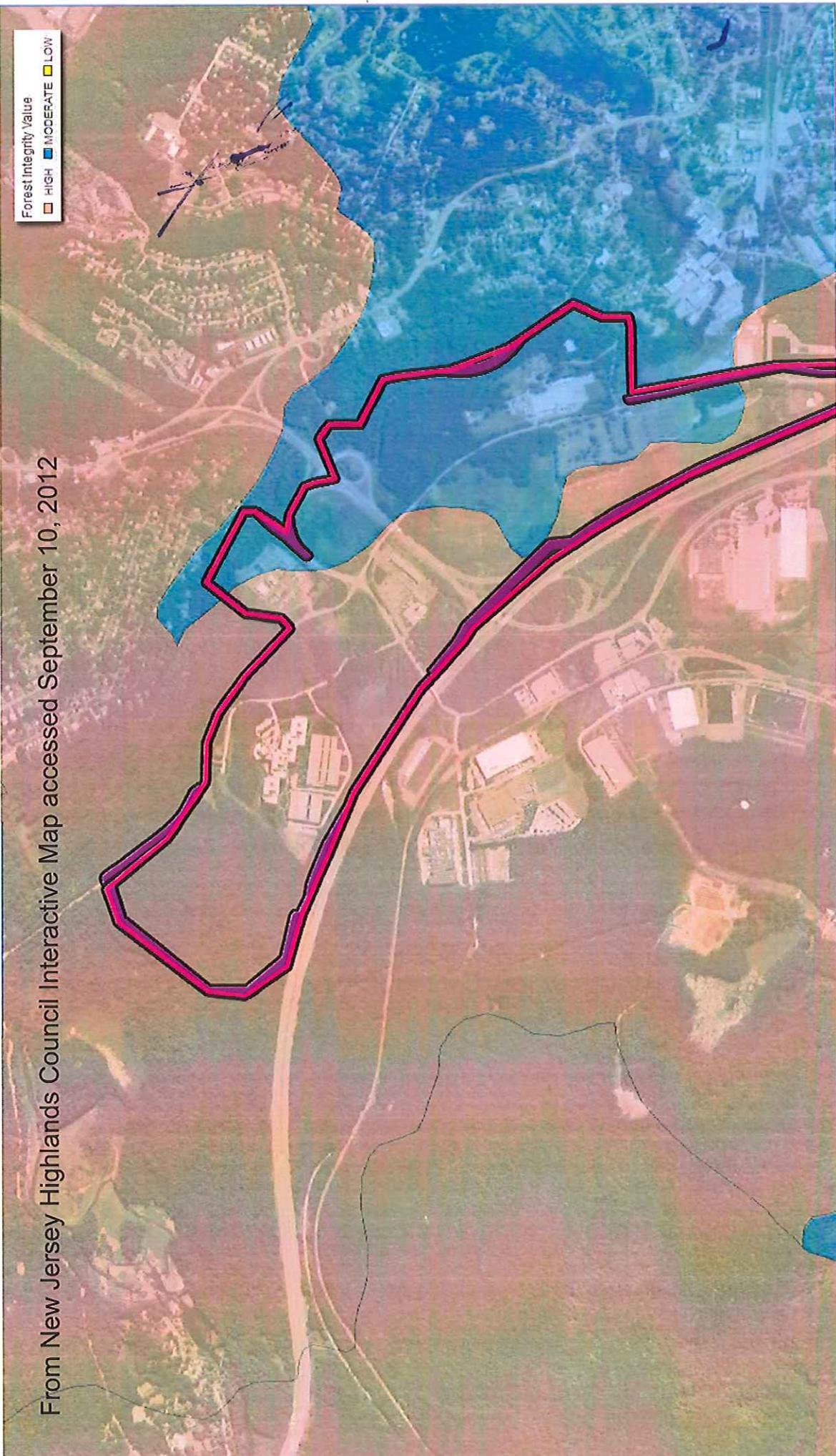
Sincerely,



Elliott Ruga
Senior Policy Analyst

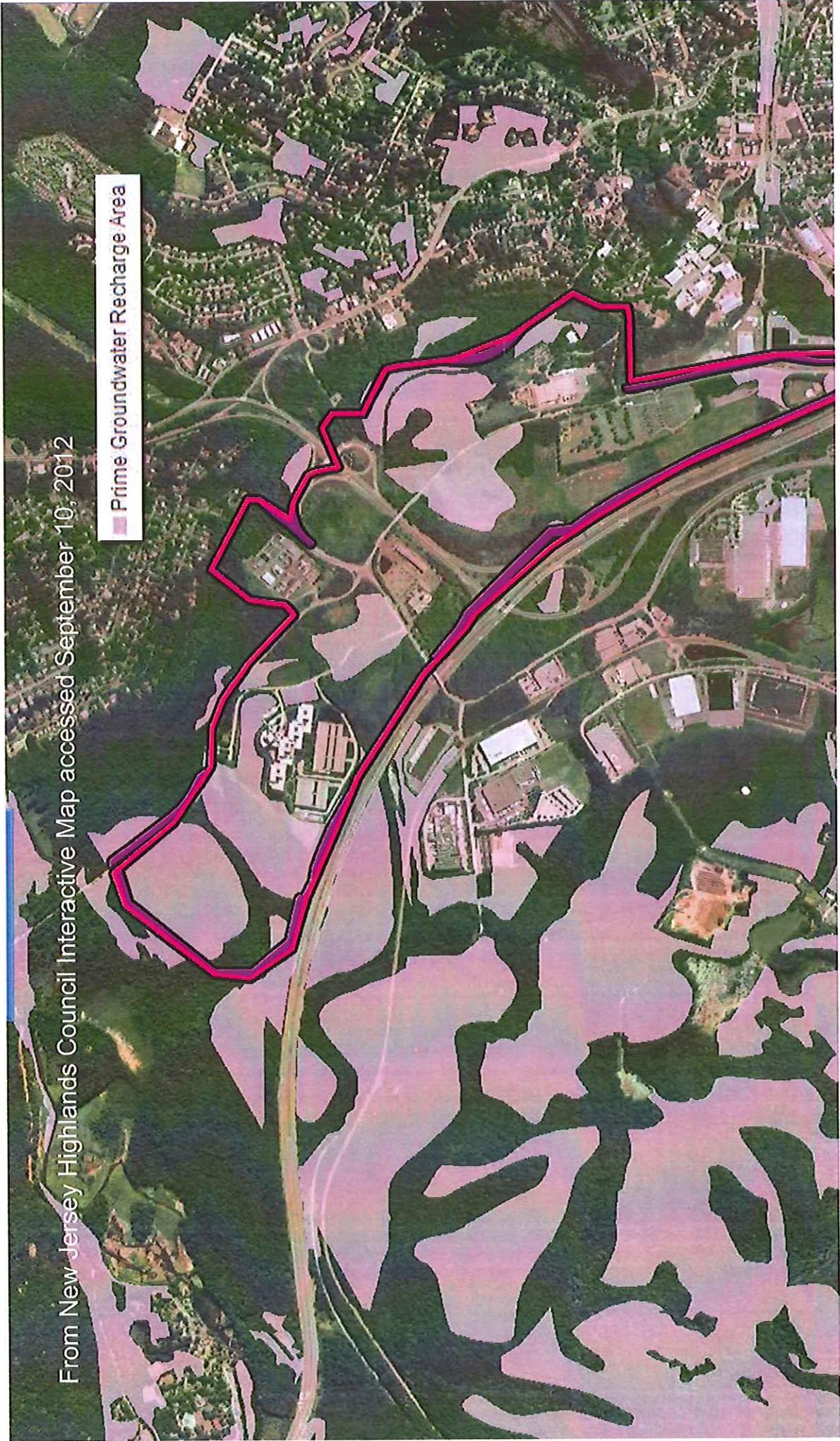
cc: State Planning Commissioners (by email)
Dan Kennedy, Deputy Director, Office of Planning Advocacy (by email)
Julia Somers, Executive Director, NJ Highlands Coalition (by email)

From New Jersey Highlands Council Interactive Map accessed September 10, 2012



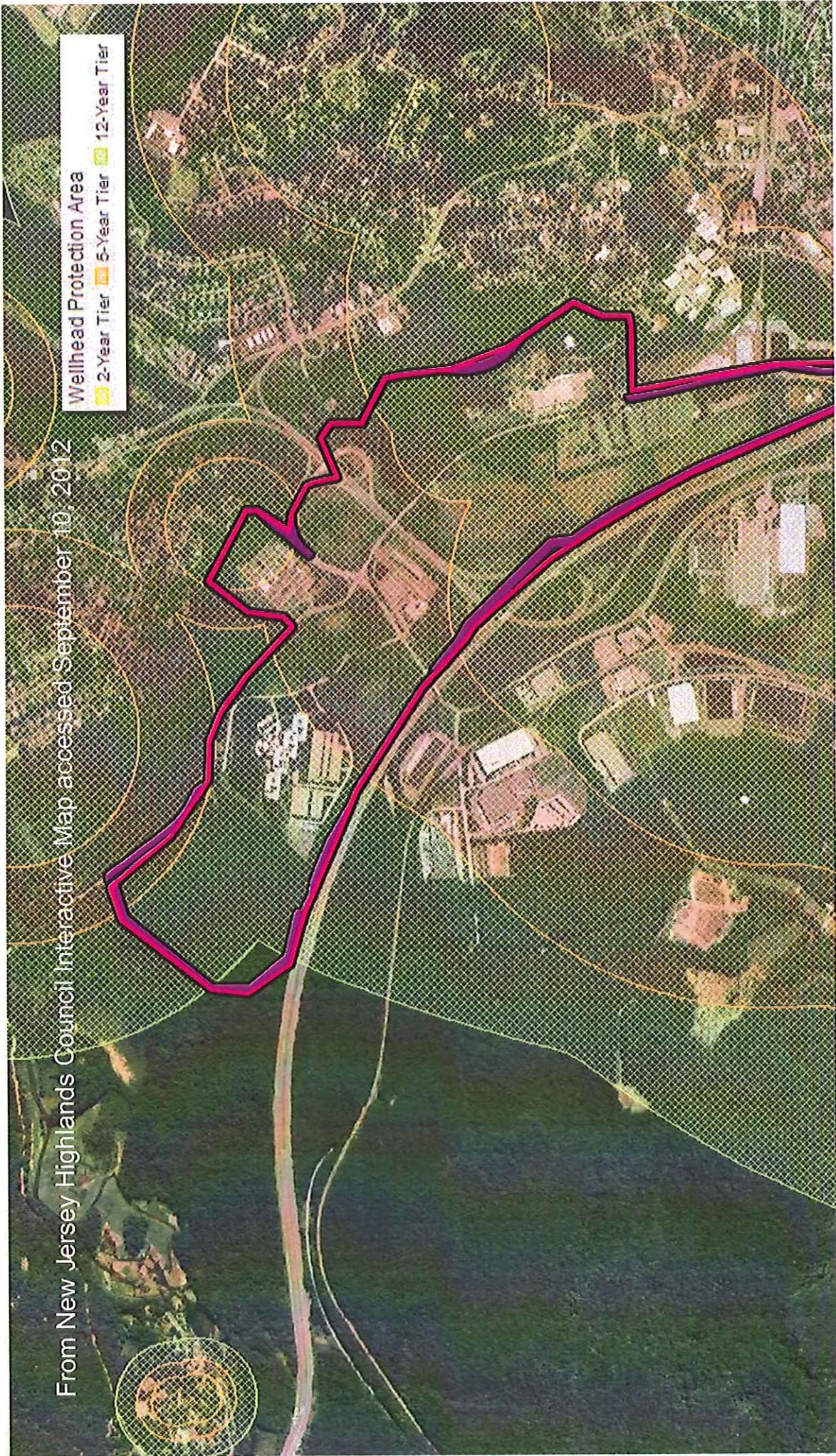
From New Jersey Highlands Council Interactive Map accessed September 10, 2012

■ Prime Groundwater Recharge Area



From New Jersey Highlands Council Interactive Map accessed September 10, 2012

Wellhead Protection Area
2-Year Tier 5-Year Tier 12-Year Tier



From New Jersey Highlands Council Interactive Map accessed September 10, 2012



From New Jersey Highlands Council Interactive Map accessed September 10, 2012

-  New Jersey Historic Districts
-  New Jersey Historic Properties

