

**PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED**

David C. Shope, Jr.  
PO Box 651  
Long Valley, NJ 07853

July 19, 2012

James Rilee, Chairman  
N.J. Highlands Council  
100 North Road  
Chester, NJ 07930-2322

Dear Mr. Rilee,

Please provide me, and the public, answers and backup data for the following questions:

1. The Highlands Council/NJDEP have set groundwater nitrate standards for the Highlands Region at less than 2mg/l. Do these standards apply solely to new residential construction using septic disposal? Or are they applicable to all land uses including agriculture?
2. About 2000 New Jersey began the establishment of an "ambient groundwater quality monitoring network." This was a network of shallow wells, including about 30 in the highlands designed to establish a link between land use and ground water quality. The highlands wells found an average of 10mg/l in agricultural areas. The Highlands Council /NJDEP threw out the shallow well monitoring results and, instead relied on data from deeper wells to justify their <2mg/l standard. This standard assumes that there is no loss of nitrogen from the point of introduction to deeper ground water levels. Please provide evidence that exists by verifiable measurement of peer reviewed modern scientific literature for this assumption.
3. At past Highlands Council meetings, two council members separately alluded to farms being considered contaminated sites -- much like Brownfields. Should the Highlands Council/DEP take shallow groundwater samples from agricultural lands to establish nitrate levels? What would the consequences and liabilities to the farmer/landowner of such a program be should this sampling show >2mg/l of nitrates?

Sincerely,



David C. Shope, Jr.