

PUBLIC COMMENT SUBMITTED AT HIGHLANDS  
COUNCIL MEETING ON JANUARY 14, 2021



SINCE 1844

## ROCKAWAY TOWNSHIP

65 MOUNT HOPE ROAD, ROCKAWAY, NEW JERSEY 07866

January 14, 2021

Highlands Council  
100 North Road (Route 513)  
Chester, New Jersey 07930

RE: Plan Conformance Grant Application  
Rockaway Township Watershed Management Program

Dear Members of the Highlands Council,

I wish to thank you for this opportunity to briefly discuss our great interest in obtaining a grant to develop a Rockaway Township Watershed Management Program, the application for which is before you this evening.

As depicted on the Lake Study Location Map, which you will find on page two, Rockaway Township – like so many other communities within the Highlands Region – is riddled with surface water bodies of varying characteristics, many of which are interconnected. If one examines the bigger picture, it is easy to see how the sub-watersheds within Rockaway Township are connected to and directly impact adjacent municipalities and the greater northern New Jersey region.

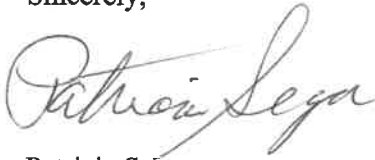
As public servants, we have a sacred civic responsibility to utilize our training, tools and available resources for the greater good. This includes studying the health of surface waters, which provide a vital and fragile resource, particularly in our part of the State. Today, it is widely understood that ponds and lakes not only provide recreational or aesthetic benefits to a community, but are also an integral of the wellbeing of the natural ecosystem. In addition, nature does not recognize if a lake is public or privately owned, so *all* bodies of water deserve our attention and, as appropriate, management.

With your support, and as outlined in our grant application, Rockaway Township officials wish to work with representatives from our private lake communities to aggregate preexisting efforts and current, real-time data. By doing so, we intend to build a strong and sound understanding regarding the current status and health of Rockaway Township's water bodies. Armed with this comprehensive information, strategic water quality mitigation techniques may be planned for and ultimately implemented.

The grant to assist with the Watershed Management Program would help Rockaway Township's Administration and smaller private lake communities defray the cost of gathering necessary data, assessing whether a problem exists, and determining how we may best address it.

On behalf of Mayor Michael Puzio and the Rockaway Township Administration, I thank you again for your consideration of our grant application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Seger". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Patricia Seger

Cc.

Mayor Michael Puzio

Allison Ferrante, Municipal Engineer

Peter Tabbot, Health Officer