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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 24, 2008

Highlands Plan Moves Forward

Council sends Plan to Gov. Corzine, commends Chairman Weingart

CHESTER, N.J. – A week after approving adoption of its Regional Master Plan, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council met today and unanimously approved the minutes from that meeting.

The next step for the Plan is a review by Governor Jon Corzine, who has up to 30 business days to review the minutes from the July 17 meeting, where the Plan was approved.

All members of the Council present also voted to send the Plan to the State Planning Commission for Plan Endorsement, as required by the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act. The State Planning Commission's endorsement only applies to master plan and development regulations for municipalities and counties in the Planning Area.

The Council also unanimously approved Initial Assessment Grants of \$15,000 each for Alexandria Township and Franklin Township.

In addition, the Council today approved a resolution commending Council Chairman John Weingart for his tireless efforts in leading the Highlands Council toward the adoption of the Plan. The resolution was presented by Vice-Chairman Jack Schrier and passed unanimously (with Chairman Weingart's abstention).

Highlands Council Member Tracy Carluccio, who serves as deputy director of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, praised the chairman's leadership.

"John has done a terrific job at encouraging participation by Council members and the public in development of the Plan," Ms. Carluccio said. "He has shown valuable leadership at every turn, an essential quality in this endeavor. Without John's leadership, we wouldn't have been able to meet the July 17th date and we wouldn't have developed such an in-depth plan."

Ed Wengryn of the New Jersey Farm Bureau, who attended today's meeting, also praised Chairman Weingart's leadership.

"Here at Farm Bureau we have always felt there was an open door for discussion and input to the Plan," Mr. Wengryn said. "Whether working on agriculture, forestry or smart growth principals we always felt we could bring our concerns and ideas forward and know they would be heard. John's leadership of the Council and his professionalism made us all comfortable with the process and bringing ideas to the Council. The resolution today by his fellow members was spot on."

The Highlands Council will next meet on Thursday, August 21, at 10 a.m. at its office at 100 North Road (Route 513) in Chester.