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Senate approves four to Highlands Council

Four new Council Members representing Hunterdon, Morris and Warren County

CHESTER, N.J. – At the May 23, 2011 session of the State Senate, four new members of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council were approved. The new members are:

- Robert G. Walton, Hunterdon County Freeholder
- Timothy P. Dougherty, the Mayor of Morristown
- James Rilee, the Mayor of Roxbury Township
- James E. Mengucci, a Councilman in Lopatcong Township.

The Highlands Act sets specific requirements for Highlands Council membership and its 15 members must include eight elected municipal and county officials and seven public members. The nearly 860,000-acre Highlands Region supplies drinking water to more than 5 million of the state's residents, the great majority of whom live outside the Highlands Region. These four new members were appointed by Governor Christie to fill "elected official" seats, in these instances, three municipal officials and one county official. They represent Hunterdon, Morris, and Warren Counties, respectively.

The four new members replace Elizabeth Calabrese, former Bergen County Freeholder; William Cogger, Mayor of Chester Township; Janice Kovach, former Councilmember of the Town of Clinton; and Marceil ("Mimi") Letts, former Mayor of Parsippany-Troy Hills.

Highlands Council Acting Chairman Jack Schrier congratulated the new members while applauding the service of departing members "We welcome these new members to the Highlands Council to join in our continuing implementation of the Highlands Regional Master Plan. At the same time we express our sincerest gratitude for the many years of service and dedication that Council members

Calabrese, Cogger, Kovach and Letts devoted to protecting the critical resources of the New Jersey Highlands."

"These new members bring strong credentials in land use planning," said Highlands Council Executive Director Eileen Swan. "The success of the Highlands Council to date has been achieved through collaboration between the Council and our Highlands municipalities and counties, and these new members bring years of governmental experience to assist the decision-making abilities of the Council."

Hunterdon County Freeholder Walton is a member of the Hunterdon County Planning Board and the Open Space Advisory Board. He is also a former Councilman and twice elected Mayor of Hampton Borough. Mayor Dougherty was formerly a Morristown Councilman At-Large. He served as Chairman of the Morristown Board of Adjustment and on the board of the Southeast Morris County Municipal Utility Authority (SEMCMUA). Mayor Rilee has served as Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councilman and Planning Board member for Roxbury Township for over a decade. He also served as Chairman of the Morris County Open Space & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. James Mengucci serves as a Lopatcong Township Councilman and he is also the town's Municipal Public Safety Director.