

**Public Comments Received on the
Draft Consistency Determination and Staff Recommendation Report for
Proposed Highlands Redevelopment Area Designation
Borealis Compounds, Mansfield Twp., Warren County**

Public Comments

One public comment letter was received from the New Jersey Farm Bureau. Following is a summary of the comments provided.

- The Farm Bureau believes that staff's recommendations to achieve RMP consistency also advises that farming be discontinued at the site. That is not consistent with the RMP's goal of protecting agriculture.
- The fields are used by a farmer who relies on them for income as part of a larger farm management unit.
- If Highlands Open Water (HOW) protection areas require a buffer, then existing soil and water conservation programs are available that can achieve environmental protection.
- Other agencies such as the NJ Dept. of Agriculture (NJDA), County Agriculture Development Boards, and Rutgers Cooperative Extensions should be included in the review when significant agriculture is involved.

Revisions to Staff Draft Recommendation Report

The staff revised the language in the Consistency Determination and Staff Recommendation Report to clarify that the HOW protection and critical habitat mitigation plans can incorporate soil and water conservation practices to achieve the desired effect of enhancement of water quality and riparian habitat while retaining agriculture uses at the discretion of the landowner.

As a result of the direction of Council members at the Council meeting of January 21st, the staff made contact with the NJDA on behalf of the applicant regarding this project. The applicant was given contact information for NJDA staff as a resource. NJDA has been in contact with the applicant to inform them that a conservation planner can develop an appropriate mitigation plan and offered to schedule a field visit.

Also as a result of the issues raised at the Highlands Council meeting of January 21st on other potential redevelopment sites that have agricultural uses, the applicant will be given contact information so that they may work with NJDA to explore continuing agricultural practices. Highlands Council staff will notify NJDA staff of projects that potentially affect agricultural uses.