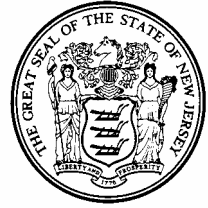


News From NJ Senate Democrats



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SENATOR SMITH ON HIGHLANDS PRESERVATION TESTIMONY BEFORE COMMITTEE

TRENTON - Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, the Chairman of the Senate Environment Committee, issued the following statement regarding testimony the Environment Committee heard today from environmental advocates and State preservation organizations on the preservation of water resources in the Highlands region:

"Today, we heard from concerned environmentalists and other preservation organizations throughout the State on the crucial need to protect the Highlands, which supplies water to a substantial part of the State, if not the entire Northeast region. I think the involvement of the other preservation organizations, such as the Pinelands Commission and the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, showcase not only the necessity to preserve the Highlands, but also successful examples of how a preservation commission should operate.

"The debate has just begun, and hearings on Highlands preservation will continue, but this has been a very good start. We've been given a number of good ideas on how best to move forward, and many of the concerns presented to us will no doubt be addressed in the final Highlands preservation legislation which will ultimately come from these hearings.

"The Highlands act as the State's drinking fountain, and we need to provide some form of protection to ensure the quality of our drinking water. As we move forward with our discussions, we will begin to craft the best solution to aid those who benefit from the Highlands' water resources."

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