

APPENDIX



Your water. Your environment. Your voice.

**Senate Environment and Energy Committee Public Hearing
Written Testimony Regarding SCR138
June 13, 2013**

Submitted by Jennifer Coffey, Policy Director, Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association

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On behalf of the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association and our approximately 3,000 members and volunteers, I am here to support SCR 138. The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association is preparing to celebrate 65 years in 2014 of protecting and restoring central New Jersey's clean water and healthy habitats. We are a proud member of the New Jersey Keep It Green Coalition.

Thank you for holding this hearing this morning. It is a pleasure to be here to support legislation that would place a public question on the November ballot that would give New Jersey voters the opportunity to choose to renew funding for the Green Acres, Blue Acres, Farmland, and Historic Preservation programs.

Through renewed funds to the Blue Acres program, New Jersey will have stable and sustainable funding to support the acquisition of properties from willing sellers to preserve flood prone areas along rivers and our coastline to alleviate costly and destructive flood damage. It is no secret that New Jersey is the most densely populated State in our Nation. This dense population has exasperated New Jersey's natural flood patterns and increased our floodplains – increasing the number of homes of businesses in harm's way. With Blue Acres funding renewal, we will have the resources to secure floodplain properties for the public good and reduce the human and environmental damage occurring in our floodplains.

With renewed funding for the Green Acres program, New Jersey will also be in a strong position to continue to preserve lands that can help to keep flooding impacts from getting worse by preserving our open spaces that function to allow rain to percolate and recharge our underground aquifers rather than flood our rivers and adjacent facilities. Through the implementation of funding for stewardship, we can better care for our preserved lands by maintaining natural flood buffers and improving absorption through restoration of our wetlands and flood areas.

In summary, thank you for continuing the bipartisan leadership on open space, farmland and historic preservation in New Jersey. These programs are important to the security of our clean water supply, addressing public health and safety issues related to flooding, protecting our natural habitats, supporting the viability of agriculture in the Garden State, and preserving our state's and, therefore, national historic treasures. I respectfully urge the Legislature to move this bill forward and give voters the opportunity to decide on this important issue.

Thank you.