

Date: August 30, 2011

To: New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council

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From: Erica Van Auken, Campaign and Grassroots Coordinator, NJ Highlands Coalition

**Sparta Township Petition for Plan Conformance – Conforming Only the Preservation Area**

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition supports Sparta's petition for plan conformance. We support the Stream Corridor Restoration and Protection plan. Given Sparta's extensive existing development and its proposed development, studying the impacts of current and future land uses on water resources is sensible. We are eager to see what plans are developed. We also support the attempt to identify on-site alternative energy facilities and opportunities for green buildings within the township. Both represent the township's effort to protect and conserve Highlands resources.

We do question Sparta's decision to conform only its preservation area. As mentioned, Sparta has substantial existing development with more planned. We recommend that Sparta reconsider its original conformance resolution to include the planning area so that the growth of their town can be reasonably guided by the Highlands Council to ensure the continued protection of our strained water resources.

We thank you for this opportunity to submit comments.