

Date: September 9, 2011

To: New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council

c/o judy.thornton@highlands.state.nj.us

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

Lebanon Township Petition for Plan Conformance – Conforming Both Areas

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition supports Lebanon's petition for plan conformance. There are many elements in this petition that will complement the goals and purposes of the RMP and we encourage the Township to follow the Council's lead in implementing them.

Implementation of the Agricultural Retention Plan will help promote agricultural activity and preservation within the township. This element is necessary if Lebanon wants to proactively maintain its rural character. In addition, Lebanon is listed as having a high watershed value, but has a water availability deficit. For this reason it is paramount that measures are taken to conserve the remaining water resources of the town. Application of the Water Use and Conservation Management Plan is necessary to conserve water and we fully support its implementation.

The non-mandatory components proposed in this petition will further enhance the Township's ability to meet the goals and purposes of the RMP. The Stream Corridor Protection/Restoration Plan will complement the Water Use and Conservation Management Plan by mitigating the impacts on land use and water resources within the Township. The Green Building and Sustainability element will further Lebanon's efforts to reduce strain on its resources. Both of these plans demonstrate the Township's willingness to conserve valuable resources.

We approve of these elements to be implemented by the Township and support their efforts to conform to the Highlands Act through these key plan elements. Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments.