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Green Acres Funding

In New Jersey, the most densely populated state in the Union, open space preservation is not only an economic necessity but a major public health and quality of life issue. In his Sunday opinion piece, Mr. Lonegan attempted to downplay the importance of the upcoming ballot question by only focusing on the small percentage of funds dedicated to park creation while ignoring all the other vital aspects of this program, including farmland preservation and flood zone acquisitions.

Lonegan is opposed to this ballot question, yet open space preservation increases local property values and stabilizes the tax rate. The preserved space generates higher tax revenues around it with increased property values but will not create new stresses on our public services and infrastructure, such as schools. In fact in 2004, the Trust for Public Land studied the cost to provide public services to different land uses per dollar of revenue raised in taxes. Open Space cost \$0.35 while residential development cost \$1.16. Residential development costs any town more than it contributes in taxes. With state and municipal budgets already in the red, this is the time to preserve open space and prevent deficit expanding development. Open space preservation has the result of ultimately paying for itself and in turn generating more revenue for a municipality. Isn't tax stabilization such as that created by open space preservation the ultimate goal of Lonegan's group Americans for Prosperity?

All New Jerseyans are worried about the implications of such a deficit but that apprehension should not prevent us from passing a ballot question that is so vital to the state, especially since it is an investment that is proven to pay for itself in the long run. Vote "yes" on ballot question #1 and see the benefits pay off for years to come.

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