

## Letters to the Editor / The Star-Ledger

**March 18, 2010, 5:15AM**

### Highlands Act works

There are several inaccurate statements State Sen. Michael J. Doherty makes in his call to repeal the Highlands Act ("Flawed Highlands Act deserves repeal," March 8).

Doherty claims "the law is severely flawed because it tramples on private property rights protected under the Constitution." The U.S. Supreme Court, the only body that can determine the constitutionality of a law, has ruled on several "takings" issues. Precedents have been established. There are no findings by the court that would support Doherty's claim. His simplistic assertion, although provocative, has no proven merit.

Doherty goes on to say that the Act is "based upon poor science, and that its implementation has severely damaged New Jersey's economy."

The Act is based on well-established science regarding hydrology, ecosystem sustainability, aquifer recharge, etc. Doherty may not agree with the science, but that doesn't make the science "poor." What has damaged our economy has to do with many factors. To scapegoat the Highlands Act is a dangerous distraction.

That the Act was passed during a time of relative prosperity is true. That we are experiencing an economic downturn is hardly reason to abandon the Act. Doherty does not explain how doing so would improve economic conditions in any way.

Failing to protect the Highlands as a plentiful source of clean water that 5.4 million residents of New Jersey and our major industries rely upon will result in grave consequences to our state's long-term financial health and its ability to retain and attract business. This can be demonstrated. Doherty's bellicose claims, however, cannot.

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