



## Highland Council persevering through upheaval

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August 10 marks the eighth anniversary of the passage of the Highlands Act. Last year, we brought attention to the anniversary because of major changes to Highlands Council membership. Since that time, Gov. Christie has appointed eight new members to the council. Now, more than half of the 15-seat council has less than a year's experience.

In addition to new appointments to the council membership, the governing body charged with protecting the Highlands region also saw an upheaval of staff membership. As many may know, earlier this year Executive Director Eileen Swan was removed from her position for purely political reasons and Deputy Executive Director Tom Borden resigned immediately in protest. Within months of losing Ms. Swan and Mr. Borden, Director of Planning and Science Dr. Dan Van Abs retired. Luckily, the council was able to promote a qualified professional from within; but in less than six months, the Highlands Council lost their top three professionals.

Even though the Highlands Council and their staff have seen great upheaval and many changes, we will continue to watch their progress and promote the protection of critical Highlands resources through municipal conformance to the Regional Master Plan. We will not be timid in voicing our concerns if the council strays from the intents and purposes of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act. There have been many changes to the Highlands Council, but the importance of protecting this critical drinking water supply remains.

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