

ANHEUSER-BUSCH PRESS CONFERENCE

SENATOR BOB SMITH, D-MIDDLESEX AND SOMERSET

MARCH 31, 2004

- FIRST, I'D LIKE TO THANK THE GOVERNOR FOR INVITING ME TO SPEAK AT THIS EVENT. AS IF WE DIDN'T ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH SUPPORT FOR PROTECTING THE HIGHLANDS, I THINK HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE AT AN ANHEUSER BUSCH BREWERY MAY BE ENOUGH TO PUT US OVER THE TOP, ESPECIALLY WITH THE COLLEGE CROWD IN THE STATE, JIM.
- BUDWEISER IS KNOWN AS THE "KING OF BEERS," AND EVERYONE KNOWS THAT TO STAY IN POWER, A KING HAS TO SURROUND HIMSELF WITH THE VERY BEST. I DON'T THINK IT'S A COINCIDENCE THAT THE KING GETS ITS WATER FROM THE HIGHLANDS, THE PUREST AND CLEANEST WATER SOURCE IN NEW JERSEY.
- LAST NIGHT, MYSELF AND ASSEMBLYMAN JOHN McKEON PRESIDED OVER THE SECOND JOINT LEGISLATIVE HEARING OF THE SENATE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AND THE ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT AND SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE, ON PROTECTING THE HIGHLANDS FROM OVERDEVELOPMENT.

- THIS WAS THE FIRST HEARING WE HELD IN THE HIGHLANDS, AT SKYLANDS MANOR IN RINGWOOD STATE PARK, AND THE RESPONSE WE GOT FROM THOSE WHO ATTENDED WAS LARGELY IN FAVOR OF PROTECTING THE HIGHLANDS REGION.
- THAT'S BECAUSE THE IMPACT OF THE HIGHLANDS ON THE GARDEN STATE IS PHENOMENAL.
- THE HIGHLANDS PROVIDE 400 MILLION GALLONS OF WATER A DAY, AS DRINKING WATER TO MORE THAN HALF OF THE STATE'S 9 MILLION RESIDENTS.
- BUT THAT WATER IS ALSO USED FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES AS WELL, FUELING WATER-DEPENDENT INDUSTRIES IN NORTHERN AND CENTRAL NEW JERSEY.
- INDUSTRIES LIKE AGRICULTURE, THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY, FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING, BAKERIES, AND BREWERIES ALL RELY ON PURE, CLEAN WATER.
- NOT ONLY IS PROTECTING THE HIGHLANDS' WATER SUPPLY ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAINING THE HEALTH OF NEW JERSEY'S RESIDENTS, BUT IT IS ALSO ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAINING THE HEALTH OF NEW JERSEY'S ECONOMY.

- IN THE PAST 13 YEARS, WE HAVE FACED 5 DROUGHTS IN NEW JERSEY, AND IN WATER EMERGENCIES, THE MOST SEVERE WATER RESTRICTIONS ARE OFTEN IMPOSED ON INDUSTRIES BEFORE THEY ARE IMPOSED ON INDIVIDUAL WATER CONSUMERS.
- NEW JERSEY MAY SOON FACE A VERY REAL, VERY DANGEROUS WATER SHORTAGE, AND OPENING UP THE NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS TO UNCHECKED DEVELOPMENT AND SUBURBAN SPRAWL WILL ONLY EXACERBATE THE SITUATION.
- THAT IS WHY IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY THAT WE PROTECT THE PRISTINE WATER RESOURCES IN THE HIGHLANDS FROM OVERDEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIAL CONTAMINATION.
- I'D LIKE TO THANK THE LEADERS IN THE SENATE AND THE ASSEMBLY, WHO HAVE SHOWN GREAT COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING THE HIGHLANDS, AND HAVE GIVEN THE TWO LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEES THE OPPORTUNITY TO CRAFT THE BEST HIGHLANDS LEGISLATION POSSIBLE.
- I'D ALSO LIKE TO THANK GOVERNOR MCGREEVEY, FOR MAKING HIGHLANDS PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION, AS

WELL AS OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES, SOME OF THE TOP PRIORITIES IN HIS ADMINISTRATION.

- THE STAKES ARE HIGH IN THE RACE TO PRESERVE THE HIGHLANDS, BUT WITH STRONG PARTNERSHIPS FORGED BETWEEN WATER CONSERVATIONISTS AND WATER CONSUMERS, BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND INDUSTRIALISTS, I THINK THAT AT THE END OF THE DAY WE WILL BE ABLE TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS, TO BENEFIT THE PEOPLE AND THE BUSINESSES OF NEW JERSEY FOR YEARS TO COME.