

News From NJ Senate Democrats



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FOR RELEASE: Immediate
June 7, 2004

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SMITH DECLARES VICTORY ON THE HIGHLANDS IN COMMITTEE

TRENTON - Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, the Chairman of the Senate Environment Committee, issued the following statement regarding the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (S-1 / A-2635), which was approved today by the Senate Environment Committee by a vote of 4-0, with 1 abstention:

"Through countless hours of testimony, deliberation and negotiation, we've crafted a bill to protect the New Jersey Highlands, and clean drinking water for half of the population of New Jersey. And today, we've released that bill from Committee.

"It's a victory, not just for clean water advocates or environmentalists, but for everyone in the State, because a clean, pure, untainted water supply is larger than simply a concern of the environmentalists. It cuts right to the health and welfare of those that are served by that water supply, and by proxy, the rest of the State that would have to step up water production to make up for lost water resources.

"The bill still has to be approved by both Houses of the Legislature, and signed into law by the Governor, so the war is not yet won. But we are closing a chapter today on the fight to protect our water, and, though the process was at times difficult and lengthy, I am proud to have played a part, along with my fellow sponsors, Senator Bob Martin and Assemblyman John F. McKeon, who worked so hard to protect New Jersey's water supply. I am proud of the Highlands Protection Act, and I am proud of the work put in by everyone -- sponsors, members of the Committee, and staff -- who have pushed to make this bill a great bill.

"I cannot say enough how much I'm looking forward to seeing this bill become law, not only to see an historic initiative that I had the pleasure to sponsor recorded into the annals of New Jersey's statutes, but also to guarantee quality drinking water for half the State. The Highlands Water Protection Act was a long time coming out of Committee, but I assure the citizens of New Jersey, when this bill is signed, it will be well worth the wait."

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