

THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2014 CONTACT: ALISE RODERER (609) 847-3700

SMITH'S OPEN SPACE FUNDING AMENDMENT ADVANCES

TRENTON – Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, released the following statement today following the Senate's approval of SCR-84, a constitutional amendment that would shift an already dedicated earmark of the Corporation Business Tax (CBT) revenue to include funding for open space projects such as Green and Blue Acres, historic and farmland preservation projects:

"For decades, open space funding has helped create and preserve New Jersey's parks and forests, beaches, rivers and lakes, and farmland. With this funding we have been able to ensure clean drinking water, improve our air quality and provide recreational space for our residents, greatly improving everyone's quality of life. This program is vital to ensuring a clean and beautiful New Jersey for generations to come.

"It's clear that we are in a fiscal crisis in this state and in order to ensure a solvent budget, we have to make hard and tough choices regarding funding. But open space is something that we cannot ignore; it must be a priority. This bill finds a balance between needed funds to preserve land, while understanding the tenuous balance of our current budget. By using an already existing revenue stream for open space projects, we are not pulling additional money out of the state's general fund nor are we asking residents to bond for these programs.

"I am hopeful that our colleagues in the Assembly will follow our lead on this commonsense legislation and provide voters with the opportunity to invest in our future."

The measure was approved by the Senate with a vote of 35-1. It now heads to the General Assembly for consideration.