

News from

Senator Bob Smith

Proudly representing the 17th Legislative District, including: Franklin, Milltown, New Brunswick, North Brunswick & Piscataway



SMITH FIGHTING TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE IN THE GARDEN STATE



Senator Smith has been fighting for a stable source of open space funding for the past three years. With Governor Christie positioning himself as an obstacle to open space preservation the battle has been a tough and tumultuous one. Last year, the first time in decades, the state did not make an investment in Green and Blue Acres or historic and farmland preservation. The red flag was raised and Smith, Chairman of the Environment and Energy Committee and a staunch steward of the environment went into action to ensure that this year the choice for the funding of open space would be in the hands of the voters of our state.

New Jersey has been the national standard for open space preservation, and since 1961, residents have overwhelmingly voted to dedicate funding towards protecting our open space. With our open space funding exhausted, Smith knew it was important to pinpoint a stable source of funding. This is why he wrote legisla-

tion to dedicate a portion of the Corporate Business Tax to forever fund preservation of land in the Garden State.

As the most densely populated state in the country, open space is at a premium. Smith has worked tirelessly in the legislature to ensure that there are protected parcels of land for the enjoyment of our children and grandchildren and generations to come. With the monies from his 2009 effort exhausted his idea of dedicating the CBT monies will ensure that we do not run out of money again while not hurting our pocketbooks.

The Green Acres program, which recently celebrated 50 years of success, has protected over 650,000 acres of land throughout the state. Long term funding of this program is even more essential as climate change is causing “100 year storms” to occur at more regular intervals. Open space funding can also be used as Blue Acres projects—a willing seller program that buys flood-prone land and land that buffers or protects other lands from storm damage.

After the Senate and General Assembly passed his legislation to include his method of funding open space on this year’s ballot Smith said, “Once a farm has been turned into a development of homes, it will never again be a field to grow blueberries, corn or tomatoes. Once we replace a forest with a mall or retail complex, deer and wildlife will never again have those trees as their natural habitat. Simply put, once New Jersey’s open space has been developed, we can’t get it back. That is why it is so important that we take action to preserve New Jersey’s remaining open space, farmland and clean water supply. Now it is time to turn our attention to the people of New Jersey in hopes that they too will support protecting our parks and forests, beaches, rivers and lakes, and farmland for the health and enjoyment of generations to come. We are now closer to ensuring that for future years, open space will be a state priority, defined in our Constitution.”



INSIDE THE FALL 2014 EDITION:

Preserving Open Space	1
Big Data	1
Open Space Funding Message from Senator Smith	2
Governors Byrne and Kean on the importance of open space	2
RGGI	3
Smith to receive Oak Leaf Award	3
Public Question No. 2	4

NEW JERSEY BIG DATA ALLIANCE OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED AS STATE'S ADVANCED CYBERINFRASTRUCTURE CONSORTIUM P.L. 2014, c. 33



Legislation sponsored by Senator Smith and Assemblyman Chivukula putting New Jersey on strong footing to confront challenges and to take advantage of opportunities posed by the growth of “Big Data” was signed into law. The “Big Data Bill” (S582/A2218) officially designates the New Jersey Big Data Alliance as the State’s Advanced Cyberinfrastructure Consortium. The NJBDA, which was initiated by the Rutgers Office of Research and Economic Development and the Rutgers Discovery Informatics Institute, will pursue a variety of initiatives, including developing training programs and college courses, unifying existing advanced cyberinfrastructure resources and laying the groundwork to create new advanced cyberinfrastructure in the state. It is the goal of the NJBDA to help New Jersey become a leader in leveraging the promise of Big Data in industry, academia and government. The members of the NJBDA are Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Princeton University, Rowan University, the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Rutgers University, and Stevens Institute of Technology.

Greetings,

We are blessed in New Jersey with a beautiful and green state. Our family farms supply us with Jersey Fresh produce and encompass a big part of our economy. Our verdant forests provide us with places to wander and wonder and at the same time protect our aquifers so we have clean water to drink. Our urban parks offer us a safe place to play with our kids and help keep our communities healthy and vibrant. New Jersey is the crossroads of the American Revolution and the Blueberry Capital of the World. We have coastlines that rival the best in the country and vistas that will take your breath away.

New Jersey has all of this because for decades we have made open space, parks and farmland preservation a priority – one that has always enjoyed widespread bipartisan support. Since 1961, New Jersey voters have passed 13 out of 13 ballot measures supportive of funding for open space, farmland and historic preservation. Now, with funds from the 2009 bond measure fully allocated, New Jersey's open space programs are in crisis. We are at a critical crossroads. For the first time in nearly 50 years, state funding for open space preservation has run out. The well is dry, and with more than 1 million acres of open space that must still be preserved to protect our clean water, quality of life and economy, the need to identify a long-term source of sustainable funding is more urgent than ever.

This year is the year that we voters will decide to preserve not only our past, but also our future. We need to do this now because there is a great deal at stake. This is our legacy. Together, we can assure that New Jersey remains our Garden State.

Very truly yours,



The Star-Ledger

OPINION EDITORIAL: “LAWMAKERS MUST ALLOCATE MORE MONEY TO PROTECT NJ ENVIRONMENT” By Brendan T. Byrne & Tom Kean

July 30, 2014

New Jersey has a longstanding legacy of protecting the environment and preserving open space that dates back to the establishment of the Green Acres program in 1961.

Since then, elected leaders from both sides of the aisle have recognized the importance of investing in Green Acres and other preservation programs to help protect our water supply and support our local and state economies.

As former governors – a Democrat and a Republican – we are proud to have contributed to New Jersey's open space legacy through initiatives like the Pinelands Protection Act and the protection of hundreds of thousands of acres of wetlands across the state.

These and other initiatives have helped keep New Jersey economically competitive by ensuring our state remains a place where people want to live, work and visit.

But while New Jersey has continued to make great strides over the past several decades, we are now in crisis. There are zero funds left for farmland and historic preservation and the Green Acres program has less than one full round of grant funding remaining.

The preservation programs that we as New Jerseyans have long valued are facing certain death unless the Assembly acts now to save them.

We urge lawmakers, when they return to Trenton for a special session on Thursday, to vote on bipartisan legislation (SCR84) to establish sustainable funding for the preservation and stewardship of New Jersey's open spaces, parks, waterways and historic sites.

The legislation would reallocate 4 percent of corporate business tax revenues – approximately \$100 million annually – that are already dedicated to environmental programs through fiscal year 2019 and dedicate an additional 2 percent of existing corporate business tax revenues from fiscal year 2020 going forward.

This is a well-reasoned and fiscally responsible compromise that would provide a dedicated source of funding for park and preservation efforts without any direct budget impact until 2020.

Open space, farmland and historic preservation programs have received an average of \$200 million annually since the establishment of the Garden State Preservation Trust in 1998. Under this legislation, preservation programs would receive \$71 million annually for the first five years, and then \$117 million annually thereafter, providing reduced but critical baseline funding.

Without action, more than one million acres of remaining open space and farmland at risk of being lost forever, threatening the safety of our drinking water and undermining the economic benefits associated with our parks, farms and open spaces.

The ramifications will be felt throughout the state, including in urban neighborhoods like Newark and Camden, where our children and families desperately need and deserve more playground and green spaces where they can gather and play safely. There is little question that parks and open spaces are key components to successful urban renewal and improving the quality of life for residents.

It is also important to note that for every dollar invested in state preservation programs, \$10 is returned in economic value through nature's goods and services, such as water filtration and flood control, and supports key industries such as agriculture and tourism.

Keep in mind that as we experience more frequent and intense storms such as Hurricane Sandy, open space and wetlands will play an increasingly important role in absorbing rainwater and runoff and mitigating costly flood damage.

Given the enormous needs and tremendous benefits, New Jersey can ill afford to let its preservation programs die.

The Senate advanced the legislation to the November ballot by a vote of 36-1 on June 26.

We urge the Assembly to pass the bill before it's too late so that we can save New Jersey's preservation programs, remain economically competitive and continue the legacy that has made New Jersey a national leader in open space protection.

FIXING THE AMOUNT OF CARBON EMISSIONS MEANS FIXING OUR ENVIRONMENT



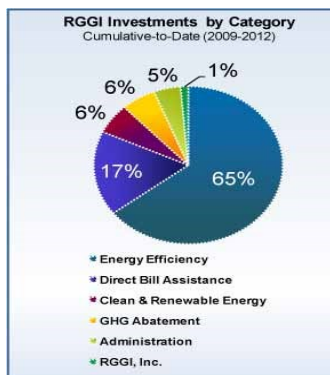
Climate change is real and we need to make the necessary changes that will get results. Let's face it, New Jersey is over-populated and over-developed. Our state is one of the main contributors of noxious gases, toxins, carbon emissions, and air pollution. If we want to protect our families and future generations from Mother Nature's wrath, change must be made. Capping carbon emissions in New Jersey is the first step in motivating big businesses to reduce the amount of pollution they create. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) started operating in 2008 and it is the first market-based regulatory program in the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. So far, RGGI has nine states cooperating: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

RGGI sets an overall cap on the amount of carbon dioxide that

can be emitted by the participating states in the form of permits. Quarterly auctions are held for power plant operators to buy and sell emissions credits. Businesses are thus incentivized to reduce carbon emissions and consequently the number of permits they have to purchase. The goal of the initiative is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states from Maine to Maryland by 10 percent over the next seven years. The nine states participating have seen dramatic results and it's time for New Jersey to clean up its act.

Governor Christie effectively ended the program three years ago, in 2011, by posting notice on the Department of Environmental Protection's website that power plants would no longer be required to comply. In March 2014, the New Jersey Appeals Court ruled that the Governor had broken the law when he decided to withdraw our state from RGGI. I am dedicating much of my time seeing to it that RGGI gets put back on track.

There is an over-whelming amount of evidence proving the effectiveness of the initiative. RGGI, Inc. is a non-profit organization that monitors the effects of cap and trade on carbon emissions of the participating Northeast states. They have found that the program influenced over \$700 million of investments in the region's energy future by reducing energy bills, boosting competition in the business market, encourages the development of local renewable energy sources, lessens the amount of harmful pollutants into the atmosphere, and promotes job growth. Why wouldn't we want New Jersey to see the same kinds of results as those already involved in the initiative?



Source: IMAGE COMPLIMENTS OF RGGI INC

SAFETY FIRST FOR HOME ELEVATION CONTRACTORS

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, Senator Smith sponsored legislation that would ensure that contractors hired to elevate homes are skilled and experienced to do the job. Unfortunately Governor Christie pocket vetoed the bill last session which means the allotted time ran out and he let the measure lapse. However, Smith did not give up and reintroduced the bill and Senate Bill No. 942 passed both houses and was signed into law.

With the surge of homes needing to be elevated in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, contractors flooded into the state

to get a piece of the market. With every skilled contractor, many more do not have the experience to effectively and safely do the work. With this law we can provide important regulations to a virtually new industry in the state, providing homeowners with the peace of mind that their contractors are well-prepared for the job.

The law, P.L. 2014, Chapter 34, will protect homeowners who are elevating their homes by requiring that any contractor offering home elevation services be registered with the state Division of Consumer

Affairs. In order to be eligible for registration through the Division of Consumer Affairs, a home elevation contractor or an employee of the company who is actually engaging in performing home elevation would need at least five years experience in home elevation.

Under the law, individuals who make false statements while attempting to register as a home elevation contractor would be subject to a penalty between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

SENATOR SMITH TO RECEIVE OAK LEAF AWARD



On October 12, 2014 Senator Bob Smith will be honored by the Nature

Conservancy for his many contributions to conservation policy in New Jersey and in particular, his unwavering efforts to secure a stable source of funding for the State's preservation programs.

The Nature Conservancy is the largest conservation organization in the world. Their mission is to conserve the lands and waters of which all life depends. The New Jersey Chapter of the Nature Conservancy manages numerous nature preserves in New Jersey, many created with the assistance of green Acres matching funds.

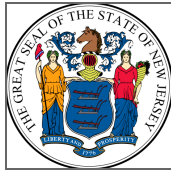
17th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT TEAM OF SMITH, EGAN & CHIVUKULA

Please do not hesitate to call the office of Senator Smith or his colleagues if they can be of service to you.



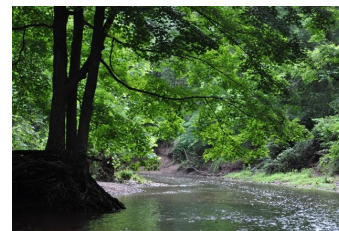
Senator Bob Smith of Piscataway (left), Assemblyman Joseph V. Egan of New Brunswick (center) and Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula of Somerset (left)

Senator Bob Smith—17th Legislative District
216 Stelton Road Suite E-5
Pisataway, NJ 08854
(732) 752-0770 phone
(732) 752-1590 (fax)
SenBSmith@njleg.org (email)
www.SenatorBobSmith.org



PLEASE VOTE YES ON PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 2 THIS NOVEMBER

Once a farm has been turned into a development of homes, it will never again be a field to grow blueberries, corn or tomatoes. Once we replace a forest with a mall or retail complex, deer and wildlife will never again have those trees as their natural habitat. Simply put, once New Jersey's open space has been developed, we can't get it back. That is why it is so important that we take action to preserve New Jersey's remaining open space, farmland and clean water supply.



New Jersey voters have approved open space funding bond acts by large margins 13 times since 1961. Most recently, New Jersey voters in 2009 approved a \$400 million dollar bond act, all of which has now been spent. According to polls New Jersey residents overwhelmingly approve of public funding for open space and farmland preservation. Senator Bob Smith, Chairman of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee worked to pass Senate Concurrent Resolution 84 to include a stable source of funding for open space preservation by dedicating a portion of the corporate business tax on the ballot this November. Let's work together to insure that the Garden State continues to boast wonderful outdoor recreational areas and farms by passing Public Question No. 2