



Commission Resolution on Pending Suffolk County Legislative Resolutions

**Central Pine Barrens Commission Meeting of August 19, 2009
Quogue Wildlife Refuge, Quogue, NY**

Commission members present:

Mr. Scully (for New York State),
Ms. Gallagher (for Suffolk County),
Ms. Prusinowski and Mr. Turner (for Brookhaven Town),
Mr. McCormick (for Riverhead Town),
Mr. Shea (for Southampton Town).

Peter A. Scully
Chair

Philip J. Cardinale
Member

Linda A. Kabot
Member

Mark Lesko
Member

Steve A. Levy
Member

Whereas, the Central Pine Barrens is a state designated, drinking water and habitat protection and preservation area of just over 100,000 acres at the junction of the Towns of Brookhaven, Riverhead, and Southampton, and was created in 1993 through the Long Island Pine Barrens Protection Act, codified in New York Environmental Conservation Law Article 57, and

Whereas, implementation of the Act is administered by the five member Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission, consisting of a Governor's Appointee, the County Executive, and the Supervisors of the Towns of Brookhaven, Riverhead, and Southampton, and

Whereas, approximately one half of the Central Pine Barrens is also legislatively designated as the Core Preservation Area, within which development is strongly constrained and preservation is strongly pursued by several levels of government, from federal through state, county, and towns, and

Whereas, Suffolk County has long been a leader in land preservation within the Central Pine Barrens (in addition to its achievements elsewhere in the County), and is the largest holder of protected lands within the "Core area", and

Whereas, there are at present three pending Introductory Resolutions in the Suffolk County Legislature which may affect the Central Pine Barrens, namely IR 1458, 1651, and 1722,

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Commission expresses its concerns regarding IR 1458 due to its apparent potential for diminishing the availability of future land preservation funds. Specifically, IR 1458 would move land acquisition monies to the Drinking Water Protection Program's general fund, removing the assurance that they will be committed to acquisition, and *the Commission is concerned*

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that such redirection of protection funds may reduce the County's future level of commitment, to implementing the land preservation goals of the Central Pine Barrens plan, and be it further

Resolved, that although IR 1651 has the laudable goal of utilizing the “workforce housing” credits accumulated (and not yet utilized) under the County’s 2004 Save Open Space Bond Act, the broadening of the redemption eligibility circumstances to include smart growth, community development and downtown areas as described in the IR - while also laudable on its face - lacks the specificity to assure that the currently restricted “workforce housing” credits are not simply used anywhere that a development project is proposed. This can easily lead to a practice of simply labeling a project as such in order to use the credits. *The Commission is eager, of course, to ensure that the use of the “workforce housing” credits within the County complements, rather than competes with, the Pine Barrens Credit Program operated by the Commission in conjunction with the County and the three pine barrens towns. Both programs are essential, and each can support and enhance the other if properly coordinated from the start, and be it further*

Resolved, that the Commission expresses its concerns regarding IR 1722, which would divert monies from the sewer component of the Drinking Water Protection Program for tax relief. While recognizing the understandable desire to reduce the overall tax burden, one way to stabilize long term operating costs of the County and Towns is to properly maintain the sewer funding component, as its very purpose is to provide long term environmentally responsible and cost effective wastewater treatment and handling. This would also further the mutual goals of water quality protection and enhancement at all levels of government, and avoid future, cost intensive, crisis driven water quality problems. *In particular, ECL 57-0121(2)(b) sets forth as a major goal of the Pine Barrens Protection Act to “protect the quality of surface water and groundwater”, and the water quality efforts pioneered by the County are major strides towards that community goal. The Commission urges the County to maintain its strong past support for this effort, and be it further*

Resolved, that the Commission hereby offers to work with Legislators and staff of the County Legislature in refining these resolutions.

Motion by: Mr. Turner

Second by: Mr. Shea

Ayes: Mr. Scully, Mr. Turner, Mr. Shea

Nays: Mr. McCormick

Abstentions: Ms. Gallagher