



Musconetcong Watershed Association

David K. Dech
Planning Director
Warren County Planning Department
Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building
165 County Route 519 South
Belvidere, NJ 07823-1949

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**WARREN COUNTY
PLANNING BOARD**

December 22, 2004

Dear Mr. Dech,

The Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA) recognizes that growth in the Musconetcong watershed is inevitable. In Warren County, the Musconetcong watershed has been left unprotected and more vulnerable to development as a result of its designation as "Planning Area" with the passage of the Highlands Act. The MWA is appealing to the Warren County Planning Department to consider this vulnerability a critical issue in its Cross Acceptance III submission to the State Planning Commission.

The MWA urges the Planning Department to consider the Musconetcong watershed as an area where high density growth will not be allowed. We would also ask that the Musconetcong River corridor be an area where growth is kept at an absolute minimum. Nearly the entire watershed is classified as (PA4B) and (PA5) in the current New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The State Plan defines some of the characteristics of these "Environmentally Sensitive" areas as having streams suitable for trout production and trout maintenance, recharge areas for potable water aquifers, contiguous freshwater wetland systems, prime forested areas, scenic vistas, and significant natural features including karst topography. The Musconetcong watershed possesses all of these characteristics and warrants continued protection.

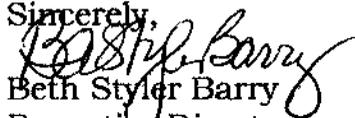
The Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders recognized the scenic, historic and recreational values of the Musconetcong Valley with its passage of Resolution 2002-53 on July 8, 2002 supporting the designation of the Musconetcong River as a part of the National Wild and Scenic River system. Data supporting the agricultural, historic and recreational importance of the watershed is abundant and can be found in the Wild & Scenic River Study. In addition to protecting the attributes which make it eligible for Wild and Scenic designation, protection of the

river valley is critical for the protection of ground and surface water quality and quantity.

Furthermore, the watershed lands are rich in soil categorized as being either "Prime Farmland" or agricultural soil of "Statewide Importance" by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, New Jersey Geological Survey, and the New Jersey Agricultural Development Board.

The Musconetcong Watershed Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Cross Acceptance III process. We urge you to include this information when transmitting the county cross acceptance report to the State Planning Commission.

Sincerely,



Beth Styler Barry
Executive Director