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James E. McGreevey, Governor

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 RELEASE: June 10, 2004

McGreevey Statement on Passage of Historic Highlands Act

(TRENTON) -- Governor James E. McGreevey today issued the following statement on the Legislature's successful passage of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act:

"New Jersey has been waiting for decades for this day. Local and state officials along with members of the public have sought protection for the Highlands for years, and today, this administration and this Legislature got it done.

"Governors Kean, Florio and Whitman all studied the issue of protecting the Highlands, and I am pleased my administration was able to build on their hard work. However, we realized there was no more time to waste. If we didn't act now, we risked losing this critical region forever.

"This legislation couldn't have passed without the leadership of Senate President Codey, Speaker Sires, the Senate and Assembly Environment committees and the Senate and Assembly Appropriations committees. They showed a great commitment to carrying on the legacy of environmental protection that is the hallmark of this great state of New Jersey.

"New Jersey residents can be especially proud today knowing they live in a state where their elected leaders recognize the importance of preserving open space and ensuring access to clean drinking water, now and in the future."

Highlands Timeline

1907 Potable Water Commission issues report indicating: "The Highlands watersheds are the best in the State in respect to ease of collection, in scantiness of population, with consequent absence of contamination,

in elevation, giving opportunity for gravity delivery and in softness as shown by chemical analysis. These watersheds should be preserved from pollution at all hazards, for upon them the most populous portions of the State must depend for water supplies. There has been to much laxness in the past regarding this important matter."

1987 The Skylands Greenway Coalition (later the Highlands Coalition) is founded by a coalition of approximately 50 environmental groups.

1989 Governor Kean initiates a Skylands Greenway Task Force that later produced "A Plan for Action" in 1992.

1992 U.S. Forest Service produces the New York-New Jersey Highlands Regional Study.

1993 Governor Florio establishes a Highlands Trust Advisory Board.

2002 U.S. Forest Service updates its 1992 study.

2003 Governor McGreevey establishes Highlands Task Force

2004 Governor McGreevey's Highlands Task Force delivers its recommendations. Assemblyman John McKeon and Sen. Bob Smith introduce the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act.

June 10, 2004 New Jersey Legislature adopts Highlands Act.

State of New Jersey Governor's Office

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