

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 106

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 1, 1997

By Senator MARTIN

- 1 **A SENATE RESOLUTION** memorializing the Congress of the United States to
2 create a Highlands National Forest Preserve for the Highlands Region in
3 Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut.
4
- 5 **WHEREAS**, The Highlands Region, stretching from Pennsylvania through
6 Connecticut, is a vital watershed, environmental, and recreational resource
7 for the nation; and
- 8 **WHEREAS**, At the turn of the century, former President Theodore Roosevelt
9 and leaders in the eastern states envisioned the establishment of a greenway
10 from Georgia through Maine, including the Highlands Region in
11 Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut; and
- 12 **WHEREAS**, The federal government has preserved land from Georgia through
13 Virginia and in parts of New England, but has left a major portion of land
14 unpreserved in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut;
15 and
- 16 **WHEREAS**, Although the Highlands Region contains New Jersey's most critical
17 watershed lands, and supplies surface water and ground water to more
18 than half of the State's residents, much of the region is threatened with
19 suburban sprawl, with one-third of the region's land already developed,
20 and over half of the remaining space unprotected; and
- 21 **WHEREAS**, Continued development would subject the Highlands Region and
22 its watershed lands to excessive amounts of point and non-point sources
23 of pollution, would require the construction of water treatment plants
24 costing millions of dollars and requiring long-term maintenance, and would
25 further stress a limited water supply for New Jersey's residents; and
- 26 **WHEREAS**, Acquiring land for watershed protection would be more cost-
27 effective, over time, than building and maintaining treatment plants; and
- 28 **WHEREAS**, The Highlands Region's ecosystem is increasingly recognized as
29 having significant biodiversity value, and provides habitat for many
30 wilderness-dependent species, such as the black bear, otter, bobcat, and
31 native trout, as well as many species on the "Watch List," including the
32 American Bittern, Chimney Swift, Red-headed Woodpecker, Black-billed
33 and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Veery, Wood Thrush, Cerulean, Prairie,
34 Canada and Kentucky Warblers, Field Sparrow, and Orchard Oriole; and
- 35 **WHEREAS**, Within 40 miles of the George Washington Bridge and the World

1 Trade Center, the Highlands Region offers open space and recreational
2 opportunities to America's most populous metropolitan area, hosting
3 millions of recreational visits yearly and accounting for hundreds of millions
4 of dollars annually in wildlife-related activities; and

5 **WHEREAS**, The United States Forest Service recently identified the New
6 York/New Jersey Highlands as a "resource of national significance," and
7 the Highlands Region is a critical natural link in a larger "Appalachian
8 Highlands," which, in turn, makes up part of the Appalachian Mountain
9 system; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Designation of the Highlands Region in Pennsylvania, New Jersey,
11 New York and Connecticut as a National Forest Preserve would make it
12 eligible as an authorized federal project for land acquisition funds, including
13 grants from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund; and

14 **WHEREAS**, Designation of the Highlands Region as a "Preserve" would
15 mandate special rules and regulations on public lands in the region that
16 would recognize its proximity to the densely populated areas of the East
17 Coast, its significance as a water supply to millions of people, and its
18 unique ecological biodiversity; and

19 **WHEREAS**, The State of New Jersey in 1995 took a critical first step in
20 acknowledging the importance of the Highlands Region by expanding the
21 jurisdiction of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission so that this body
22 could participate in the region's management; and

23 **WHEREAS**, The Congress of the United States has established the Land and
24 Water Conservation Fund to aid states in the preservation of resources of
25 "national significance"; now, therefore,

26

27 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

28

29 1. The Congress of the United States is memorialized to create a
30 Highlands National Forest Preserve in the Highlands Region in New Jersey,
31 Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut, subject to the concurrence of those
32 states.

33

34 2. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution, signed by the President of
35 the Senate and attested by the Secretary of the Senate, shall be transmitted
36 to the Governor of the State of New Jersey, every member of Congress
37 elected from this State, the President and Vice President of the United States,
38 the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Chief of the
39 United States Forest Service, the Speaker of the United States House of
40 Representatives, the majority and minority leaders of the United States Senate
41 and the United States House of Representatives, the Governors of
42 Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut, and every member of Congress
43 elected from the states of Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut.

1

2

STATEMENT

3

4

This resolution memorializes Congress to create a Highlands National

5

Forest Preserve in the Highlands area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New

6

York and Connecticut, subject to the concurrence of those states.

7

8

9

10

11

Memorializes Congress to create Highlands National Forest Preserve.