

## OPENING STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC MEETING

February 9, 2011

In July of 2008, the Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) adopted amendments to its Water Quality Management Planning Rules. Among the amendments to those rules is a requirement for counties to update wastewater management plans every 6 (six) years. In general, wastewater management plans include maps that determine which parts of the county will be served by sewers and which parts will be served by septic systems. The rules require that the updated wastewater management plans avoid major conflicts between environmentally sensitive areas and future sewer service areas and be reflective of local planning requirements. The updated plans and maps will ultimately reflect proposed changes in wastewater service area designations to eliminate avoid or minimize conflicts with Category One waters, wetlands, threatened and endangered species habitats, and other unique and rare ecological communities. Other changes to the draft sewer service area have or will be made to advance local planning objectives. The designation of sewer service areas significantly influences the pattern and intensity of future development in a county, since more dense development can be accommodated utilizing public sewer collection and treatment systems than development utilizing septic systems.

The NJDEP is holding this public meeting on a preliminary draft sewer service area map as part of MORRIS County's planning efforts to update the Morris County Water Quality Management (WQM) Plan. This preliminary draft sewer service area map is proposed as a working draft that will continue to be further refined in coordination with the NJDEP, county and

municipalities. Please be aware that the draft sewer service area map represents a preliminary working draft and is subject to change. For example, projects located in those sections of the existing adopted sewer service area that are proposed to be removed, but which have received both local approvals and wastewater approvals, will not be removed from the future sewer service area.

This public meeting is being held to facilitate the proposed changes in sewer service area designation and is being conducted in accordance with the requirements of Administrative Order 2010-03. The NJDEP and MORRIS County will accept comments and information related to this map until March 12, 2011 - 30 (thirty) days after this public meeting.

The process this evening is as follows. There are maps containing the preliminary draft sewer service areas located throughout the room. There are representatives of MORRIS County Planning Department and the NJDEP here this evening to answer any questions you may have.

County or NJDEP representatives will assist you in locating your property to determine if it is in the proposed sewer service area, is proposed to be excluded from the sewer service area due to environmental constraints, or is not in the proposed sewer service area because it was never included in the adopted sewer service area to begin with. Areas on the map that are “gray” represent the Highlands Preservation Area, Municipalities conforming to the Highlands Regional Master Plan, or areas covered by an Wastewater Management Plan that is currently being reviewed by the NJDEP. If you have specific questions and wish to discuss your site with a County or NJDEP representative, please sign up on the sheet found by the front door.

We will attempt to assist people in the order they sign up. If your property was in the current sewer service area and is proposed to be removed due to environmental constraints, and if you wish to request that your parcel be included in the proposed sewer service area, representatives will provide you with a detailed handout with the information you need to provide to the NJDEP and County. These requests and all required materials outlined on the handouts must be submitted within 30 (thirty) days of this meeting. The NJDEP and MORRIS County will confer on all requests for sewer service modifications and respond to each request in writing. Please note that there will be an additional formal public comment process and formal public hearing conducted prior to the plan's adoption. The format for the public meeting conducted this evening is informal and for informational purposes only. There is no stenographer and there will not be a response to comments document generated as a result of this meeting. There will be additional opportunity for public comment during the public comment period and public hearing to be conducted in the near future.

As required, the Highlands Council will be provided an opportunity to review the draft sewer service area for consistency with the adopted Regional Master Plan for non-conforming municipalities located within the Highlands Region.

At this time if you wish to review the draft sewer service area map there are several stations located throughout the room.