

**RESOLUTION 2025-  
NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL  
APPROVAL OF THE PETITION FOR PLAN CONFORMANCE FOR  
THE TOWNSHIP OF JEFFERSON, MORRIS COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act) has created a public body corporate and politic with corporate succession known as the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council); and

**WHEREAS**, Section 15 of the Highlands Act provides for voluntary Plan Conformance whereby any municipality or county located wholly or partially in the Planning Area may voluntarily revise and conform its local master plans and development regulations, as they relate to the development and use of land in the Planning Area, with the goals, requirements and provisions of the RMP at any time; and

**WHEREAS**, the Highlands Act provides that approval of a Petition for Plan Conformance entitles the conforming municipality or county to specific benefits including: planning grants, technical assistance, state aid, priority for projects, tax stabilization funds, a strong presumption of validity and extraordinary deference in the event of legal challenge, and legal representation; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 18 of the Highlands Act obligates the Highlands Council to establish a grant funding program to reimburse municipalities and counties for reasonable expenses associated with Plan Conformance; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 18, 2008, the Highlands Council approved Resolution 2008-73 to provide grant funding for Highlands municipalities to cover the reasonable expenses associated with revisions to master plans, development regulations or other regulations to conform them to the RMP; and

**WHEREAS**, The Township of Jefferson is located in Morris County and 24,046 acres are located in the Preservation Area with the remaining 3,311 acres in the Highlands Planning Area; and

**WHEREAS**, Jefferson Township's Petition for Plan Conformance in the Preservation Area was approved by Highlands Council Resolution 2014-7 in April of 2014.

**WHEREAS**, in April of 2025, the Township completed an additional Initial Assessment Report for the Planning Area and on April 2, 2025 submitted a Petition for Plan Conformance including a resolution for all lands lying in the Planning Area; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 24, 2025, the Highlands Council staff posted a Public Notice, the Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report, and the complete Petition documents on the Highlands Council website for a public review and comment period with written comments due on or before May 24, 2025, and no comments were received; and

**WHEREAS**, the Highlands Council accepts the staff recommendation as stated in the Final Consistency Review and Recommendations Report; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Highlands Act and the Plan Conformance Guidelines, the Township of Jefferson's compliance with an approved Final Consistency Review and Recommendations Report, the Highlands Plan Conformance Procedures, and the Highlands Act shall maintain the Township of

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Jefferson’s status as conforming to the Regional Master Plan and all statutory benefits associated with Plan Conformance; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:20-5.j, no action authorized by the Highlands Council shall have force or effect until ten (10) days, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays excepted, after a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Council has been delivered to the Governor for review, unless prior to expiration of the review period the Governor shall approve same, in which case the action shall become effective upon such approval.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Highlands Council hereby approves the Township of Jefferson’s Petition for Plan Conformance with conditions, as set forth in the Final Consistency Review and Recommendations Report; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Executive Director or designee is authorized to make any amendments and publicly release the Final Consistency Review and Recommendations Report, Highlands Implementation Plan and Schedule, and amend the Plan Conformance Grant Agreement consistent with direction from the Highlands Council and the Department of the Treasury, to properly effectuate the intent of the Council and thereafter execute the Report and Schedule on behalf of the Council; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Township of Jefferson is hereby entitled to the statutory benefits associated with Plan Conformance as detailed in the Highlands Act, the Regional Master Plan, and the Plan Conformance Procedures in Addendum 2019-2, so long as the Township of Jefferson remains in conformance with the Regional Master Plan and to the extent such funds are made available by the State; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Executive Director or designee is authorized, consistent with direction from the Council, to oversee and monitor the Township of Jefferson’s compliance with this Resolution and to take any and all action necessary in coordination with the Highlands Council.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Highlands Council at its regular meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of June 2025.

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Carl J. Richko, Chairman

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<b>Vote on the Approval of This Resolution</b>	<b>Motion</b>		<b>Second</b>		<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Abstain</b>		<b>Absent</b>
Councilmember Alstede											
Councilmember Bush											
Councilmember Dougherty											
Councilmember Dressler											
Councilmember Francis											
Councilmember James											
Councilmember Kibler											
Councilmember Van Abs											
Councilmember Visioli											
Chairman Richko											