



New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

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Commission approves agreements to provide for efficient, yet rigorous reviews of certain development applications proposed by counties

NEW LISBON, N.J. – During its regular meeting today, the New Jersey Pinelands Commission approved agreements that will provide for more efficient reviews of certain public development applications being proposed by Pinelands counties.

The Commission voted to authorize intergovernmental agreements with each of the seven Pinelands counties (Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Ocean) in the million-acre Pinelands Area of southern New Jersey.

The agreements enable the Commission's staff to review and approve small development projects proposed by counties rather a lengthier process that ultimately requires the full 15-member Pinelands Commission to approve these projects at their monthly meeting. **The proposed projects covered by the agreements still must meet all of the zoning and environmental standards contained in the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan**, such as the protection of ground and surface water resources, wetlands, threatened and endangered plants and animals, vegetation, and historic resources.

"These agreements will result in more efficient reviews of minor public development projects, such as traffic signals, street lights and guide rails, that typically do not raise Pinelands issues," said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Commission. "The review of these applications will be no less rigorous, and all Pinelands standards must be met."

Fees to review applications that qualify under the provisions of the agreements would be eliminated. Additionally, the agreements call for the Commission and the counties to continue their work to implement specific management practices that will better protect and promote native vegetation, including rare plant species, along roadsides in the Pinelands. A series of best management practices have been prepared, and they provide specific guidance for managing road shoulders in a manner that protects and perpetuates native vegetation, while also ensuring traffic safety along Pinelands roads. The practices also reduce maintenance costs, hinder the spread of invasive, non-native vegetation, and help to curb the use of costly soil amendments and herbicides.

For the benefit of the public, the Commission will maintain a listing on its website (www.nj.gov/pinelands) that shows all public development applications that have been filed by counties and are subject to the agreements. The listing will also provide information regarding the status of each application.

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