



## **New Jersey Pinelands Commission PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Pinelands Commission approves measure to establish new management standards for advanced wastewater treatment systems in the Pinelands**

NEW LISBON, N.J. – During its meeting today, the Pinelands Commission approved changes to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan that establish new management standards for advanced wastewater treatment systems in the Pinelands.

The rules set forth a series of measures that provide for the long-term maintenance of "alternative" or advanced treatment systems, including certification that these systems are in good repair and are functioning properly. Property owners are required to use these systems when building on lots that are between 1 and 3.2 acres. Unsewered development is not permitted in the Pinelands area on lots smaller than 1 acre. These treatment technologies can remove more than 65 percent of the pollution that is typically generated by standard septic systems.

The changes do not apply to standard or traditional septic systems. After reviewing and analyzing comments it received from Pinelands municipalities, counties, residents and others, the Commission chose not to proceed with changes to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan that would have required all Pinelands municipalities to establish programs for the long-term maintenance of standard septic systems. This would have included issuing operating permits to ensure that these systems are inspected every three years and pumped only as needed, as opposed to existing Pinelands regulations that require these systems to be inspected and pumped every three years. These existing rules will remain in effect.

"The Commission remains committed to the goal of improving septic system maintenance, but it also recognizes that, in the current economic climate, where all levels of government are shrinking, there is a need to move ahead more gradually with Pinelands-specific rules for managing standard septic systems," said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Commission. "We look forward to working with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to help municipalities and counties implement the DEP's statewide septic management rules in the Pinelands."

Stokes added that the Commission will continue to provide public education on the importance of maintaining septic systems for clean water, public health and preservation of the investment that homeowners have in their systems. The Commission also will explore the possibility of offering municipalities incentives for establishing a program to manage standard septic systems. This could include grants.

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