



New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

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Pinelands Commission Supports Recall of Well Permit

BERLIN, NJ - Annette Barbaccia, Executive Director of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, today urged the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to recall Water Allocation Permit Number 5044, the permit which authorizes the operation of Berlin Well Number 12.

In testimony before a DEP panel, Barbaccia stated that environmental monitoring has confirmed that operation of the well has resulted in reductions in ground water levels, surface waters and streamflows. This poses an ecological threat to nearby Pinelands habitat, including that of local populations of Swamp Pink (*Helonias bullata*), a plant species listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Berlin Well Number 12 was constructed from 1994 to 1996 and began operation in 1997. Soon after, the well was shut down due to taste and odor problems caused by a chemical compound secreted by algae originating from wetlands located approximately 700 feet from the well. A filtration system was installed and the well again began operation in June 2000.

In 1994, when preliminary hydro-geologic testing for the well was proposed, the Pinelands Commission advised against siting a well at its current location due to its proximity to a stream and wetlands. The Commission further advised that the well should be relocated closer to the divide of drainage subbasins so that the well would not result in any observed drawdown to surface waters or wetlands.

At today's public hearing Barbaccia called for the revocation of the permit on the grounds that depletion of the Kirkwood Cohansey aquifer can have far-reaching adverse impact on the long-term viability of the Pinelands environment. Barbaccia explained that the Pinelands Commission is in the early stages of a comprehensive five-year study of the Kirkwood-Cohansey, in cooperation with the DEP, Rutgers University, the US Geological Survey, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The study will examine the impact of groundwater withdraws on the hydrology and ecology of the Pinelands.

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