

**TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

R E S O L U T I O N #25-60

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF THE SOURLANDS AS AN AREA
OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN**

WHEREAS, the Sourland Mountain Region, defined by its unique geology, encompasses 90 square miles, including parts of eight municipalities in Mercer, Somerset and Hunterdon counties; and

WHEREAS, the Sourlands, home of the largest contiguous forest in Central New Jersey, are an island of biodiversity in a sea of encroaching sprawl; and

WHEREAS, the Sourlands are home to dozens of rare and endangered species of plants and animals, and an irreplaceable stopover for migrating birds; and

WHEREAS, the Sourland forest is the most intensive carbon sink anywhere in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, more than 90 miles of streams in the region are “first order” streams, the critical headwaters to the Raritan and Millstone Rivers, an important source of drinking water for New Jersey residents; and

WHEREAS, the Sourlands are enjoyed and relied on by countless urban and suburban New Jerseyans as a recreational resource; and

WHEREAS, the Sourland forest is losing more than a million trees (about a quarter of the forest) to the Emerald Ash Borer, and more to emerging threats; and

WHEREAS, natural forest regeneration is impossible in the Sourlands because of the vast overpopulation of white-tailed deer; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey is currently updating the State Development and Redevelopment Plan; and

WHEREAS, designation of the Sourlands as an Area of Critical State Concern (ACSC) in the State Plan would have numerous benefits, including:

- State recognition of the importance of the Sourlands will help with both the public and private preservation of land.
- The ACSC designation will help attract both public and private funding for reforestation efforts.
- The ACSC designation will lay the groundwork for any needed legislation to protect the Sourlands.
- The ACSC designation will help with efforts to bring the deer population under control.
- The ACSC designation will call attention to the need to protect the quantity and quality of surface waters and groundwater of the region.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Hopewell Township supports the designation of the Sourlands as an Area of Critical State Concern and urges the State Planning Commission to include this designation in its current update of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Date Adopted: January 27, 2025

CERTIFICATION

I, Katherine Fenton-Newman, Municipal Clerk, of the Township of Hopewell, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Township Committee at the regular meeting held on the 27th day of January, 2025, in the Municipal Building Auditorium, Hopewell Township, New Jersey and via Zoom Video Communications.



Katherine Fenton-Newman, CMR, RMC
Municipal Clerk