

## RESOLUTION OF THE NEWARK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 2020

WHEREAS: The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders has authorized \$600,000 from the Recreation and Open Space Trust Fund to determine the feasibility of constructing a 500-seat amphitheater at the Turtle Back Zoo location (“proposed project”); and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would involve the removal of 1.5 acres of land from the South Mountain Reservation; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would involve the deforestation of much of that land; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would convert open land area, with attendant soil, plants and other means of minimizing stormwater runoff to developed land area; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would include and increase vehicle traffic and parking in the Zoo area; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would generate stormwater runoff in excess of present stormwater runoff volumes; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would entail automotive fluids and other pollutants entering that stormwater; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would generate construction and maintenance related pollutants that would enter the stormwater; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would entail that runoff, along with any attendant pollutants flowing into waterways which enter and pass through Millburn Township; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would exacerbate the present overflow conditions within Millburn Township; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would channel that runoff through the Orange Reservoir; and

WHEREAS: The Orange Reservoir is leased from the City of Orange, said lease to expire in 2032; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project has no plan for any changes that may occur to said lease on its expiration, including the routing and release of waters from the Reservoir; and

WHEREAS: This failure to secure protection for the Township of Millburn from flow volume, water quality and costs ongoing through the leasing process; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would remove from South Mountain Reservation land, vegetation, streams and animal habitats which are irreplaceable in location and kind; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would, if brought to fruition, cost the County and therefore its Townships and Municipalities \$8,600,000 at current estimates; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would involve significant environmental impact on the Township of Millburn, and surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project would be inconsistent with the guidelines of environmental best practices, as well as the objectives of the State Master Plan; and

WHEREAS: This proposed project was drafted without public comment and has been funded with the expenditure of over \$400,000 without public referendum on the spending of such funds, let alone performing an independent Environmental Impact Study prior to spending such funds;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE NEWARK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REQUESTS:

1. That the proposed project be halted immediately;
2. That an Environmental Impact Study be performed by an accredited, independent licensed professional firm prior to such referendum, with said Study being made conspicuously available to the citizens of Essex County in general, and Millburn Township in particular; and
3. That absent a finding from said Study that the proposed project will have a net neutral environmental impact on the water, air, lighting, groundwater pollution, surface pollution, carbon absorption, open space area and other related impacts, the proposed project be abandoned.

Respectfully submitted,

NEWARK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION