

## Talking Points on GSPT II

- **Need for Farmland Preservation**
  - Farmland is a working land different than park and recreation lands. They stay on the tax roles and even with Farmland assessment consume 36 cents in services for every dollar paid.
  - It is critical for the continuation of agriculture in the state to have a stable land base. Reports show that 500,000 (five hundred thousand) acres would be needed to sustain a viable agriculture industry in the state. Currently 160,000 acres are preserved of the approximately 800,000 in agriculture production now.
  
- **Conservation Practices on Farmland**
  - Farmland and working lands are an important part of environmental resource protection. Filter strips, manure management and other farm conservation programs make modern agriculture function to meet New Jersey's environmental needs. Funding for cost share programs within the bond act will ensure that the farms in the future will be environmentally viable.
  
- **Equity Protection**
  - Farmland preservation has been an important tool in doing estate planning and leveraging capital into the agriculture economy with many farmers reinvesting into improved operations or expanded land purchases.
  - The preservation programs have been important part of treating landowners fairly when private lands have been needed for environmental or public recreation purposes. The compensation paid for development rights or for lands in fee simple is part of the State's obligation to acquire lands at fair market values.
  - Extending the January 04 dual appraisal methodology for rules, regulations and zoning in place as of January 04 will assure landowners they have options in being treated fairly when negotiating sales with the State
  
- **New Opportunities**
  - Focus increased dollars to the Highlands region for farmland and forest land protection.
  - The opportunity to establish a Forest Land Easement Purchase Program. Live farmland preservation that just purchases the development value this kind of program could allow for private land management on deed restricted forest lands keeping managed forest lands on the tax roles.
  - Focus on wetlands and flood prone areas allows for the SADC to develop a preservation criteria for lands that have low development value but may have high agricultural value due to rich soils that can be found in many flood prone areas.