



FRED W. THIELE, JR.
Assemblyman 1st District

CHAIR
Committee on Local Governments

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Rules
Environmental Conservation
Oversight, Analysis & Investigation
Transportation

September 8, 2022

Ms. Jacqui Lofaro
Chairperson, Planning Board
Town of Southampton
116 Hampton Road
Southampton, NY 11968

RE: Lewis Road PRD/Lewis Road Site Plan East Quogue, Town of Southampton

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

I write the Southampton Town Planning board in opposition to the above referenced development applications. In summary, the proposed applications would substantially increase the intensity of development for property located within the Central Pine Barrens, situated in the hamlet of East Quogue, Town of Southampton.

I am a former Southampton Town Supervisor and an original Central Pine Barrens Commission member who assisted in the drafting of the state legislation and the original comprehensive management plan for the Central Pine Barrens. Further, as the State Assemblyman representing this area and as a member of the State Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee for more than 27 years, I have continued to take an active interest in this matter. The regional scope of this project and its impact on Long Island's water supply and the Central Pine Barrens makes this project a matter of regional and state concern.

Long Island's sole source of drinking water comes from our underground aquifer. The State of New York has been involved in protecting this resource for decades. For example, in 1987, the State Legislature adopted Article 55 of the State Environmental Conservation Law which designated nine separate groundwater protection areas (SGPAs) on Long Island. The subject property was included within one of these SGPAs. In 1993, the State Legislature designated the Central Pine Barrens as a state reserve. The subject property was included in the boundaries of the Central Pine Barrens.

The Town of Southampton has also taken numerous actions to protect drinking water including up-zonings to reduce density and the intensity of land use. In the mid 1980's the subject property was up-zoned to CR-200 and CR-120, the most restrictive residential districts in the Town.

In short, from a perspective of water quality and open space preservation, it has long been understood that the subject property has special attributes worthy of protection.

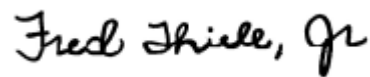
At the same time, there can be no doubt that water quality across Long Island continues to decline. Nitrogen has been declared to be public enemy number one. This has been well documented by the Suffolk County Department of Health Services and the State Department of Environmental Conservation. It is the cumulative impacts of land use that has caused this problem.

All levels of government are engaged in aggressive efforts to remediate our groundwater. The voters in Southampton Town approved a referendum by an 80% to 20% margin to permit up to 20% of the CPF to be used for water quality remediation projects.

Contrast those actions with this project which would permit much more intensive land uses than was ever contemplated when the Central Pine Barrens Act was adopted.

In summary, the proposed project before the Planning Board is completely inconsistent with the legislative history and the actual provisions of the Central Pine Barrens Act which seek to protect our drinking water. In addition, the Town of Southampton has not complied with the legal dictates of the SEQRA process. Approval of this project would throw out nearly 50 years of planning efforts to protect the Central Pine Barrens. The Planning Board should reject the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred Thiele, Jr." in a cursive style.

Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr.