

# Replenishing the Preservation Trust

There are a few things we can be sure of when fall comes to New Jersey.

At farmers' markets, apples, pears, pumpkins and fresh cider replace the summer's bounty of corn, peaches, berries, and tomatoes. Blazing colors and crisp air, signals of nature in transition, beckon us to woodlands, parks, and open vistas that still abound in our state. School children experience first hand New Jersey's rich heritage by visiting the places where America's story began and its progress was shaped.

And, this fall, there also will be an election. New Jerseyans will go to the polls and make important decisions about leadership, governance, and public policy.

These are tough times and in less than two weeks, voters will face tough choices. One of the most important is whether, in the midst of difficult economic times, New Jersey should invest \$400 million to replenish the Garden State Preservation Trust. This is the state fund that helps purchase land to maintain open space, protect sources of clean water, create urban parks and playgrounds, preserve farmland, and save historic landmarks. And the Trust is essentially broke.

Few would dispute the goals of the Trust. However, with the state facing financial challenges, the issue of whether we can afford to make this investment now deserves careful consideration. And so does the

question of whether we can afford not to make this investment.

New Jersey is a small state but it's been blessed with a startling diversity of landscapes: Rolling, wooded hills; cornfields and orchards; nurseries that nestle still in the corners of suburbia. We have the Pine Barrens, the Meadowlands, salt marshes, freshwater wetlands, and, of course, the Shore. America's founders fought here. The Industrial Revolution started here. Technologies that transformed the world were invented here. The thought of incurring more state debt is difficult. But the thought of losing our natural and historical legacy at the ongoing rate of 50 acres a day is even more troubling.

Continuing New Jersey's open space funding even in today's troubled economic times is essential to support both the quality of life for future generations and their economic well-being. There is a practical reason for investing in open space now when land prices are at multi-year lows and there's the practical reality that if we wait to fund the Trust, we will never recover what is lost.

*What's your view? Please let us know at [Opinion@PSEG.com](mailto:Opinion@PSEG.com).*



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