



Regional Plan Association

... a research and planning agency supported by voluntary membership to promote the coordinated development of the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Region.

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION FAVORS ALL THREE BOND PROPOSALS,
BUT ASKS FULL USER PAYMENT FOR WATER, WASTE CLEAN-UP

Regional Plan Association's New Jersey Committee today endorsed all three bond issue proposals on the ballot Tuesday, November 3, that would provide funds to protect farmland, add to the State's water supply and protect the supply from toxic wastes. The Committee also recommended a "yes" vote on the "question" of lifting the interest rate restriction so that water supply bonds authorized in 1969 can be sold.

The Committee recommended that water users pay the full cost of supplying them and those dumping toxic wastes pay the full costs of cleaning them even though immediate conditions require public borrowing for speedy action. The Committee also promised to work with the State Department of Environmental Protection to help eliminate any obstacles to prompt construction of the water projects.

[The Committee statement is attached.]

The New Jersey Committee is headed by Robert V. Van Fossan, Chairman of Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company.

Regional Plan Association has been studying development issues of the New Jersey-New York-Connecticut urban region since the 1920s. Its current chairman is William S. Woodside, Chairman of American Can Company.

Among Regional Plan's recommendations that have been achieved are the establishment of the State's Green Acres program and a review of its progress that stimulated acceleration of the program; a 1967 program for water supply, of which the current bond proposal is a part; establishment of the State Capital Needs Commission at a time when New Jersey had fallen behind in a broad array of construction needs; and a recent study of New Jersey cities that found a stronger base there on which to build new centers of New Jersey life than most non-city people would expect.

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NEW JERSEY COMMITTEE

Regional Plan Association

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The New Jersey Committee of Regional Plan Association supports the proposed bond issues on water supply, hazardous waste and farmland preservation before the voters on the November ballot. These bond authorizations are consistent with Regional Plan's long standing goals of preserving open space and developing and maintaining abundant, high quality water resources.

Agriculture is a preserver of open space and a vital element of New Jersey's economy. The State's farms provide fresh produce and dairy products to New Jersey residents without the high costs of out-of-state transport. The export of agricultural products adds more than \$50 million annually to the State's economy. During the last twenty years, however, nearly one-third of New Jersey farmland has been lost to development. Today, an average of one farm a week is taken out of production. The \$50 million farmland preservation bond issue is an essential step to protect the State's agricultural industry. It will establish a cooperative program between State and counties to buy up development rights to specifically designated farmland and insure that this precious and productive open space will remain for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Unlike other regions of the country, New Jersey is blessed with abundant water resources. What the State lacks is adequate water storage capacity and the interconnections necessary to efficiently transfer supplies around the State. Earlier this year, while areas of the State came

perilously close to running out of water, more than adequate--but non-transferable--supplies existed only miles away. The State stands to lose new commerce and industry if it cannot guarantee the supply and delivery of its abundant water resources. The \$350 million water supply bond issue enables the State to invest in adequate reserve capacity, make important watershed interconnections, rebuild old, leaking water supply systems, and assume its proper responsibility as the wholesale provider of new water resources. Regional Plan's New Jersey Committee first urged these actions in 1967. In carrying out this mandate, we urge New Jersey to foster rate policies that result in the users paying the full cost of water in order to stimulate consumer conservation and cover the future costs of adequately maintaining and expanding the system.

The Committee also recommended a "yes" vote on the "question" that will be on the ballot about eliminating the six percent interest limit on State bonds authorized for water supply projects in 1969, an authorization never used because bond interest has been far above the six percent limit so the bonds could not be sold. A "yes" majority would add \$50 million to the \$350 million bond authorization for water projects to be voted on at the same time.

The best water supply and storage system in the world has little value if the water itself is contaminated. The third bond issue before the voters in November is intended to provide New Jersey with the capital necessary to preserve important water resources from contamination by hazardous wastes. The State Department of Environmental Protection states that the entire water supply of Atlantic City as well as essential Monmouth County water resources are presently facing contamination within a matter of only a few years unless protection measures are undertaken immediately. With the \$100 million hazardous waste bond issue, New Jersey will have the financial resources necessary to clean up critical situations for which no other State or federal funds are available. Although it might be preferable to insist that these costs be paid upfront by polluters responsible, it will take more time than the State has. This bond issue provides New Jersey with a contingency fund, but we urge the State to repay the public's investment by aggressively pursuing full reimbursement costs from private polluters.