Honorable Philip Murphy

Governor

State of New Jersey

225 West State Street

Trenton, NJ 08625

RE: New Jersey Protecting Against Climate Threats Regulations

Dear Governor Murphy:

I am an elected official in the Municipality of # and I am writing to you in support of the pending New Jersey Protecting Against Climate Threats -Resilient Environments and Landscapes (REAL) issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

These rules are important for the State of New Jersey and communities like mine to protect our residents from flooding. Our communities are increasingly experiencing flooding from storms. Our coastal communities are increasingly experiencing sunny day flooding not associated with any storm. These flooding events range from mere nuisance to costly events for our municipalities. Our municipality must respond to flooding with road closures and openings; the removal of debris from our roadways and repairing the damage caused by flood waters. Our first responders are called to rescue motorists and residents trapped by flood waters. This is a drain on municipal resources and a threat to human life.

NJDEP, while developing the REAL rules, used the best available science to develop its predictions for sea level rise and the resulting elevations for critical infrastructure. The rules require reducing stormwater runoff volumes which will help reduce flooding. They also encourage the restoration of buffers upon redevelopment, helping to reduce flooding and improving natural systems. These natural systems not only provide flood reduction but other tangible benefits like habitat, reduction of heat island effect, and other benefits.

These rules are not extreme, as some argue. They are based upon the best available science and an understanding that what we build today will exist for decades. What we build today is likely to be standing in 2100. It is irresponsible to allow development to occur in places we know will flood without fully accounting for that flooding. Implementing these rules will not require any property owner to obtain flood insurance that doesn’t already have to. On the contrary, by requiring resiliency and addressing flooding during new development or redevelopment these rules may in fact lower the cost of insurance.

These rules do not hinder economic prosperity but assist it. A recent Rebuild by Design study explains that NJ has $435 billion dollars of property value plus another almost $6 billion at risk due to flooding. Not implementing resiliency measures, as found in the REAL Rules, will have significant negative impacts on our economic prosperity. We also know from a U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Allstate report that every dollar invested in resiliency measures can return up to $13 dollar in economic benefits. These benefits range from reduced costs of recovery and reduced damage to saving jobs and economic production. We also know that the Federal Government has called for reductions in disaster assistance and has called on the states to take a larger role in resiliency and preparation. We must take those actions now, or New Jersey may be paying for it in the future.

I support the NJPACT REAL Rules and urge the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to adopt these rules as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Cc: Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, NJDEP Shawn.Latourette@dep.nj.gov