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Ralph Siegel 984-4600

## **Trust board Approves \$15 Million in CBT funds for Green Acres land acquisitions, including Blue Acres flood property buyouts**

TRENTON – The board of the Garden State Preservation Trust today approved \$15.3 million in funding for the State Office of Green Acres to use in the acquisition of land for parks, forests and wildlife refuges across the state.

The funding included \$3 million for the Blue Acres program to acquire private homes and properties that have been subject to repetitive losses from flooding.

The money comes from the dedication of a 4% share of the Corporation Business Tax to open space purposes approved by the voters in a 2014 referendum.

“It is critical to maintain the forward momentum of our land preservation programs,” said Trust Chairman Greg Romano. “These grants will do that. These funds will be put to immediate use in the preservation of important natural lands everywhere in the state and bring relief to landowners subject to destructive flooding.”

The resolutions approved today by the nine board members of the Trust will now be introduced as appropriations bills in the Legislature. If approved by both houses, as expected, the bills will go to the Governor for his signature. Trust approval has been the first step in this process for almost 20 years and so far, all of its appropriations have been approved, often in unanimous votes.

The Trust today also approved \$9.7 million for the Department of Environmental Protection capital projects at state-owned parks, forests and refuges. It is intended for this funding to be in place for the DEP’s use during the 2019 Fiscal Year beginning July 1.

Trust Executive Director Ralph Siegel said New Jersey taxpayers since 2000 have committed nearly \$3 billion to state and local preservation and conservation efforts. More than 430,000 acres have been preserved under GSPT-funded programs, including more than 118,000 acres in the restrictive Highlands area.

Equally as important, Chairman Romano said, is the fact that about \$511 million has been committed to the development of recreational facilities and to the preservation of historic sites. About \$331 million of these development and historic-preservation funds have gone to urban areas and another \$71 million has gone to densely populated communities and suburbs.