
Public Hearing

before

SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES & ECONOMICS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*“Ecotourism: Marshaling resources to promote
New Jersey’s ecotourism treasures”*

LOCATION: State House Annex
Committee Room 10
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: March 4, 1996
11:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Joseph M. Kyrillos Jr., Chair
Senator Andrew R. Ciesla, Vice-Chair

ALSO PRESENT:

Assemblyman Nicholas Asselta
District 1

George LeBlanc
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Senate Natural Resources and
Economic Development Committee



Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

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hw: 1-109 (Internet edition 1997)

SENATOR JOSEPH M. KYRILLOS JR.: (Chairman) Ladies and gentlemen, if I could have your attention please. If everybody could take a seat or go off to the side or the back, or go out of the room for final discussions, I would appreciate it.

I welcome everybody to this public hearing of the Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee. I'm Senator Joe Kyrillos. In a few minutes, we'll be joined by Senator Andy Ciesla, from Ocean County, the Vice Chairman.

I want to introduce everybody to Assemblyman Nick Asselta, of Cape May and Cumberland counties.

Assemblyman, if you would, I know you have other Assembly business this morning, but we would love for you to sit up here with us and participate in the meeting for as long as you can.

As I think everybody knows -- and I'm very heartened by the turnout -- the purpose of today's hearing, marshalling resources to promote and protect New Jersey ecotourism treasures, is to hear what people are undertaking throughout New Jersey, which enhances the nature-based tourism known as ecotourism. As Chairman of this Committee, I've worked with my staff, and a lot of you know that for the last five months in collecting critical written resource material on the experience of New Jersey and its regional and its national organizations in promoting nature-based tourism. Today's hearing is kind of a culmination of that research project.

I think we all know that people have been hiking and bird watching and observing nature in New Jersey for years, but under the big umbrella of ecotourism, I think we've got an opportunity to begin a planning process which makes certain that a consensus is built to bring together resources around priority environmental projects. We're going to hear today from Cumberland County officials who will highlight a unique program in that county which brought together business leaders and environmentalists, government officials and concerned residents to plan, all together. There were no wars, as I understand it, resulting from this effort. Instead, there was a 102-page master plan

document. Mr. Stephen Keys will be joined by Jay Langenbender, who is representing the South Jersey Nature Conservancy, and they will be here to tell us about it.

Neither the environment nor economic development suffered in this planning process. I'm pleased to say that sometime in April, as a prelude to Earth Day perhaps, the Senate Natural Resources Committee will be traveling down to Cumberland County. We're going to be inviting Assemblyman Asselta to be right along with us for a hearing, and maybe, our own ecotourism adventure while we're down there.

We're going to hear from the New Jersey DEP this morning, and our Division of Travel and Tourism, who together will provide team testimony about wonderful ecotourism projects that are under development, the watchable wildlife project is the New Jersey showcase ecotourism venture that is going on right now.

We want to thank the Division of Parks for working with the Division of Travel and Tourism for our wonderful display that is over here in the hearing room.

Carry Radcliffe has been our resource person, coordinating on our behalf with the Division of Travel and Tourism and the DEP and directing our Committee staff and my personal staff to other outstanding resources in New Jersey and around the country. Carry is on maternity leave, but representing her today is her boss, ironically, Jim Hall, who heads the Natural and Historic Resources Division over at DEP. One of their colleagues, Jim Shesa, will be testifying later on the watchable wildlife project.

Linda Morgan, who is very involved in the West Milford Ecotourism Project is here to provide us insights from the Regional Plan Association.

And our list of experts goes on and on and on. I'm going to ask all of them to be as concise as possible, because we have such a packed hearing room, and so many people who want to speak today.

Probably what I feel is most important about today's hearing is beginning a dialogue, a dialogue about the best ways the State can enhance a new tourism area without compromising its environmental resources. New Jersey has tourism as the

number one employer, the number two industry -- that is very surprising to most people -- so we know its value to the New Jersey economy.

But we also know that destroying environmental destinations will undermine jobs and the economy at the same time, and that's why the issues of balance and priorities are very key.

I'd be remiss if I didn't thank a couple of people who have served as very important resource people for me and the Committee and the Committee staff on this project. Mike Catania, who I don't know if he is here today, with the Stockton Alliance. And of course, we all know the Nature Conservancy. Mike helped us focus the questionnaires which many received and led us to key people and key resource groups.

David Moore, I would like to mention, of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. David issued a challenge last spring about environmental resource protection and ecotourism advocacy. He wrote that, and I responded to his syndicated column with one of my own, and committed to design a series of hearings on ecotourism advocacy. His defense of ecotourism, without compromising the natural habitat helped guide the focus of today's hearing.

So we're going to begin in just a couple of moments. The speakers have been asked to frame their discussion within the suggested questions for today's hearing. These are the same questions that we posed to over 250 of New Jersey's leading environmental and ecotourism advocates.

Number one is the promotion of ecotourism, a positive policy direction in New Jersey. How do we define ecotourism? In a time of diminishing local and county and State and Federal resources, how can we work together to effectively use existing resources to promote ecotourism here in New Jersey? And finally, how can we balance the needs of taking advantage of a new tourism market with those of preserving the quality of our environment while we promote ecotourism destinations?

I mentioned, as I began my remarks, that we would be joined by Senator Andy Ciesla, and Andy is here.

Senator, welcome to the hearing.

Assemblyman Asselta, thank you again, for sitting in with us. At any time you need to chime in or want to chime in, please do so, unless you would like to make some opening remarks now, Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN ASSELTA: Yes. Senator, first of all for putting this Committee meeting together. I know the people in the audience are very thankful of this Committee for coming together to really promote and find that critical balance between the environment and the promotion of ecotourism in the State of New Jersey. I just feel it's another component to the strong tourism economy that we right now do enjoy. I think this is really a very important Committee meeting this morning, and thank you for putting it together.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you very much, Assemblyman. As you know, we want to work very closely with you and with your Committee and your colleagues in the General Assembly as we march forward in promoting this issue and try to craft a State policy and perhaps have some legislation emerge from this hearing process.

This is a public hearing, and there will be an official written transcript made of it, so I would ask people, as they testify not only to speak into the microphones that will amplify their voice, but also the other, smaller microphones that will record their testimony.

For people who don't get a chance to speak today, your written testimony can be made a part of the official record, and more people will be able to read that than hear it today, so I urge you to give your written testimony to George LeBlanc. And even those who come up here and do read from their testimony, it will make it easier, I believe,

on the transcribers if we can get a copy of it. That way we can be assured of knowing exactly what it is that is said.

So, with that, let me bring up DEP Assistant Commissioner Jim Hall to the witness stand, and Johnathon Savage, who is the Deputy Director of the Division of Travel and Tourism.

At the very same time, in the interest of time, let me bring up a couple of Jim's colleagues: Bob McDowell, who is the Director of the DEP Division of Fish and Game as well as the principal zoologist of the Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife, Jime Shasha. If you all could come out.

Jim, why don't you lead things off. Thank you for joining us. It's good to be here. I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to testify here this morning, Senator. I applaud your efforts and that of your Committee in bringing this topic up and launching forward in a discussion of it that I think will be beneficial for everybody. And I think it's also appropriate that we're up here at the same time with Travel and Tourism. I understand Linda wasn't able to be here because of some health problems in her family. But I think it's good that we're teamed up together in discussing this topic.

Most everything in New Jersey's economy is dependent on the health and vitality of our environment. There is no disputing that clean water, land, and air are basic ingredients for a sustainable and livable economy. Those basic ingredients are important in connection is even more evident when one focuses on New Jersey's tourism industry. Our large and successful tourism industry relies directly upon ecological, scenic, cultural integrity of our resources. There should be a conscious effort on the part of government and the tourism industry to promote businesses and programs which most contribute to the natural and cultural resource preservation, not just for the sake of ecotourism business opportunities, but also for assurances that our entire tourism industry continues to develop in an environmental friendly way.

Tourism is economically important to all of us. As you noted, it's the most important single industry in the world right now employing one out of every fifteen workers. It's second in New Jersey from an industry standpoint, and it's continuing to grow.

Nature related travel has grown at a staggering pace, nearly 30 percent during the past five years. In 1994, there were 6.5 million day trips encountered natural areas in New Jersey with over one million overnight trips. Visitation to our State parks now exceeds 12 million annually, and overall economic impact to the State on nature related tourism is estimated to be several billion dollars a year.

I provided the Committee with a more detailed description of our efforts and won't take up your time going through each one of the endeavors, so I'll briefly provide an overview of the Department's goals and responsibilities as we see them related to ecotourism.

The two primary areas the Department can concentrate its efforts: The first is to meet our responsibility to provide high quality, nature related experiences and recreational opportunities to the residents and visitors of New Jersey on our public lands and waters. Second is to forge collaborative relationships with the tourism industry and with local communities to support growth of ecotourism related enterprises and to help communities preserve their natural and cultural heritage.

Ecotourism is our first and foremost, the everyday job we do in our divisions. Resource protection, environmental education, resource recreational access are never ending aspects of our work. Every day and in every part of the State, people travel to fish, swim, hunt, hike, view wildlife, learn through interpretive facilities at one of our State parks, forests, historic sites, wildlife management areas, and recreation facilities. Increasingly we see our facilities used for special events ranging from festivals to craft shows to battle reenactments to concerts and so forth. Our friends groups that we

have work very closely with us and are integral to making this take place, along with our many volunteers.

This is particularly difficult in an era of scarce public resources, where we are always challenged in meeting our responsibility for recreational opportunities and finding ways to target our resources to maximizing access while minimizing costs. We actively use volunteers. We are seeking private financial support, and are looking for creative ways to provide interpretive and educational opportunities to our visitors. One of our most promising endeavors, watchable wildlife will be discussed with you from Director McDowell and Jim Shasha.

As to the second area, support of ecotourism enterprises and community assistance, we're developing a plan to provide educational and technical assistance for interested public, non-profit, and private entities. Through workshops, seminars, and collection and dissemination of pertinent ecotourism materials, and by establishing a network of experts, both inside and outside of State government, will enhance our ability to provide hands-on assistance to both private and public entities for the development and implementation of community-based ecotourism plans.

Our efforts -- our collective efforts -- need to be designed to be catalytic and to support growth and sustainability at one of the largest industries of the State. We must all bear in mind how fragile and vulnerable our natural resources are, though, and realize that without careful planning and control, appropriate use and enjoyment of the natural world can quickly turn into exploitation or degradation.

One uninformed careless visitor can do more destruction to a sensitive site than thousands of well-managed and planned for visits. It is not the scale of visitation that is critical, it's how we plan for it and manage for its impact.

One of our most important responsibilities is to develop ways of visiting and experiencing the natural world without compromising its integrity. To quote from a speaker from the Conservation Fund in Washington, D.C.: "Communities can grow

without destroying things people love. Beauty, heritage, environmental quality, are good for business. Unless tourism industry thinks it can sell trips to lookalike motels, tract housing, traffic jams, and cluttered commercial strips, it ought to share in an agenda to protect natural and cultural resources on which it relies.”

Fortunately, thus far in our State, the tourism industry and many other diverse interested parties, as evidenced here today, are interested in New Jersey ecotourism and are overwhelmingly positive toward this discussion. I look forward to working with Travel and Tourism, the Legislature, and the public, in moving forward with an agenda that can make this better for all of us.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Jim, thank you.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HALL: Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Let’s move right over to Jonathon Savage, from the Division of Travel and Tourism.

I know Linda Connel, the Director, wanted to be here today, Jonathon. Is that correct?

JONATHON SAVAGE: Unfortunately, that’s the case, Senator. She extends her apology. She was not able to attend today, but hopefully, in her shoes I can fill in some of the details for the Committee.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Sure. Give our best to her.

MR. SAVAGE: I will do that.

I certainly am pleased to be here on behalf of Director Condlin. Thank you to the members of the Committee, and certainly to you, Senator Kyrillos. Linda has been called out of town, and unfortunately she had some business to attend to. But she, like myself, as well as everyone else here, as evidenced by the crowd you have on hand, are very interested not only in this concept, but with implementation of several of the measures that, hopefully, you’ll hear about today.

In particular, as Jim said, we are the number two industry in the State, about a half-a-million employees, as well as about \$23 billion in revenues are generated by tourism on an annual basis. Speaking specifically to the questions that are to be asked, “Why should we promote ecotourism as a positive policy and tourism strategy for the State”? Probably one of the biggest reasons is because it really is one of the fastest growing market niches in the country, let alone the world. It also represents a growth opportunity for not only mature businesses, but also lesser developed areas of the State to benefit economically from this particular concept.

It also represents an opportunity to promote new tourism opportunities throughout the State, utilizing, as we would hope, a limited capital development funding for existing resources.

Lastly, why should we promote as a positive policy tool: Primarily because it represents the best of all worlds in combining new, planned economic growth, with the targeted approach to environmentally sensitive economic development. As a former economic development director, as it turns out in Cumberland County, of which you have several representatives here, it was always our intent to not only plan adequately, but certainly to make the best use of all resources that we had available to us.

How would we define ecotourism? Ecotourism is an effort to use tourism as an economic stimuli for local communities and for preserving and protecting irreplaceable natural resources. Economics is the engine that powers the vehicle of ecotourism. Natural resource conservation through economically beneficial travel, that’s the way we look at ecotourism.

How would we work together, not only with the people in this room, but certainly with the communities throughout the State to use existing resources to promote ecotourism in New Jersey? There are a couple of different things that we would like to see implemented, and we are presently working on, as well. Undoubtedly, the key to successful development and promotion of ecotourism is a close working relationship

between organizations. As you can see, both State and Federal, public and private, whose goals overlay; namely, preserving our natural resources and generating economic activity.

For example, the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism is currently working closely with not only the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry on several projects, in particular one of them being an ecotourism media familiarization tour this June-- Travel writers from throughout New Jersey and the surrounding states and our target markets are invited to spend three days camping and enjoying the natural and historic beauty of the State in an effort to encourage them to write feature articles about the State's ecotourism opportunities.

That's with our media familiarization tours. Portions of the tours will be financed by the private sector, so you can see we're not only cooperating with another State agency on this particular tour, but also with the private sector to develop things that will be written about and heard about throughout the media.

The Division also highlights ecotourism in all of its promotional materials and activities. As a matter of fact, we are in the development stage of a new poster series that we will be issuing this spring that will highlight culture, historic, travel, and ecotourism in particular. I just saw the proofs of this particular poster series today, and it looks really nice.

Lastly, in its role as an industry educator, the Division plans to organize and implement a series of workshops to teach the local communities how to preserve, protect, and maintain their natural resources while reaping the greatest possible economic benefit from promoting ecotourism. We hope to implement these workshops in the upcoming spring and summer months.

I should also tell you that we are also part of the Watchable Wildlife Committee. The upcoming annual Governor's Conference will be focusing a specific section on ecotourism, and we're also a cosponsor for the upcoming Stockton Alliance

Conference on Ecotourism. So we are involved. We certainly look forward to being involved in the future, and we feel like we are a part of the process, and certainly part of the team that is building the ecotourism alliances throughout the State.

Lastly, to answer the last question, how can we balance the needs of taking advantage of a new tourism market with those preserving the quality of our environment when we promote a destination? The fact is, an area that provides optimal ecotourism opportunities only continues to do so if the area is well-maintained. Therefore, it would be counterproductive, in the long run, to try to overutilize an area in the interest of short-term financial gain. In order to protect our ecotourism resources and the economic interests of the State, a monitoring and communication system between all involved parties, i.e., State and regional tourism officials, natural resource managers, and the private sector needs to be established. As a Division, we'd also like to see a long-range strategic tourism plan be implemented on a statewide basis that would focus not only on ecotourism but other tours and partnerships that we would like to be able to implement with the private sector.

I'd like to-- Those are pretty much my remarks. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity of being here today. We certainly stand ready to not only work with the partners that we have at this table, as well as throughout this room, and we're very excited about not only the possibilities for ecotourism, but where we're going in the future.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Jonathan, thank you very much. I missed your last point. You talked, I think, about some sort of consortium of sorts, of people focused on planning.

MR. SAVAGE: Director Collin has always been a very big advocate of a statewide master plan for tourists. IN particular, we would see this particular element,

ecotourism, as a function of that plan, not only in and of itself, but certainly of a good portion of that plan.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: You mentioned your June outing with outdoor writers. I think that's a great idea. That's a project you're working on in concert with the DEP?

MR. SAVAGE: Absolutely, as well as the private sector. We think it will probably be one of most popular tours ever.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: What kind of media will be with you on that day?

MR. SAVAGE: It hasn't been firmed up yet. We're still getting some more invitations out. But we have some very good indications from not only instate writers, but out-of-States media people. We're going to take them throughout the entire State, not only some of the great natural resources we have in the Pinelands but certainly in the northern and southern part of the State.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: I wouldn't overlook the New Jersey based press corps, because there are so many people in this State who aren't necessarily focused on the kinds of activities we're talking about: hiking, canoeing, fishing, hunting, and the like. They don't realize the kinds of opportunities that we've got right here, so they're not necessarily going to be getting some outdoor life magazine that may circulate around the country, and they circulate to those who subscribe to it here in New Jersey, but won't get to the rank and file citizenry. So you need to keep things tight and finite, I'm sure, but--

MR. SAVAGE: I agree with you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: --it wouldn't be so bad to have a couple of representatives of the day-to-day press corps here.

MR. SAVAGE: No, we certainly don't want to exclude them, as well as, we always constantly need to keep reminding ourselves of the citizens of the State of some of the tremendous environmental and ecotourism resources that we have right here. We believe that our citizens should be some of the first ones to know. We certainly want

to attract business from outside the area, but we do a substantial amount of business instate, and we don't want to exclude any of the local media.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Right. The two departments are working closely together, I see. Any suggestions or anything we can do to help you fulfill your missions in a joint way?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HALL: I think in some of the notes I gave, I gave some more specific written things which I will give to George for the purpose of the Committee.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Jim, are you more concerned about protecting the natural resources that we've got out there? You know we've got twin goals here: one is to promote tourism, which I know is Jonathan's overarching goal--

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HALL: Yes, I think--

SENATOR KYRILLOS: --and at the same time, a call for an appreciation of the environment without overdoing it, without hurting the resource. Those are goals that we've got to seek mutually.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HALL: And providing the resources to make it available and for everyone to be able to use and have access to.

MR. SAVAGE: As well as to plan long term as to what it is that we're going to develop and specific implementation measures that it is going to take to do that, as well as, as Jim said, provide the resources to do that.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Well, listen, stay right there. Jim you've got a couple of your people -- Bob McDowell, from Fish, Game, and Wildlife; Jim Shasha is the principal zoologist, and they are the people who have been working with the Division of Travel and Tourism, I understand, on this watchable wildlife program that was mentioned. If you maybe shuffle some chairs around you could all make it work with the microphone.

Tell us about this Watchable Wildlife Program.

B O B M c D O W E L L: Well, we've got that and more for you, Senator.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Okay, take it away.

MR. McDOWELL: Quite frankly, I'm very appreciative of the fact we're getting to talk to you and have this meeting, because for a long time, New Jersey has been starving to death with a ham under its arm as it relates to economic capability as far as ecotourism and nature-based tourism is concerned. We've been going around the State, we're working with various counties talking to them about possibilities for further recognizing the values that exist in their own areas and exploiting those in such a way that is both sensitive to the resources and protecting them, and also taking care of them. There can be some simple things done.

We're blessed with a great variety of wildlife in this State. We happen to be in the travelway for both species that fly over us and land here, and also species that swim by us out off the coast. New Jersey's fish and wildlife resources are a tremendous asset to the State, and based upon studies done by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1991, over 4 million of our citizens somehow enjoy the fish and wildlife resource, and they spend \$1.4 billion a year that is captured by the small businessmen and businesses in the State.

Recreation results in 32,000 jobs, \$740 million in salaries, \$95 million in State sales tax, and \$94.6 million in Federal income tax. Over and above the dollars generated by this activity where the people like to look at wildlife or actually fish for it and catch it and take it home and eat it, is the value of feeling good about their environment. New Jersey has a lot of benefits to illustrate that.

The Delaware River, as an example, supports major striped bass population. The migration is going up as far as 100 miles up the river now as we restore the stocks of these fish. Fifty-pound-plus strippers are caught by anglers as far up as Lambertville and up as far as the Delaware Water Gap. Hardly anybody -- the locals -- recognize that this is going on. Only the local fishermen, who keep it a secret, know it's

going on for obvious reasons. (laughter) But that could be promoted in such a way to both protect the resource and to gain economic benefit from it.

The Delaware, in fact, supports a host of fisheries including shad, musky, channel catfish, large and small mouth bass, and these fisheries have existed for over 20 years in great numbers. As the river is cleaned up-- Thirty years ago these fish didn't exist; today they do.

Regionally few areas come close to New Jersey's Warig Bald Eagle population. You don't have to go to Maine to see bald eagles anymore. In the winter you can see as many as 90 on the Delaware. Hardly anybody in the urban areas knows this. Do you think they would pay to come out to Warren County or Cumberland to see and photograph wintering eagles? I think they will.

We have over 100,000 acres of coastal marsh where people can clam and crab and water fowl hunt. The State is a natural concentration area for migrating shore birds. One of the largest migration of shore birds in the world lands in Cape May County to finish their travels to the arctic. People are beginning to realize this. They are spending money to come photograph and see this natural wonder.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Let me interrupt you. My understanding is it's the second largest migration point on the continent. Is that correct? I've heard that.

MR. McDOWELL: Yes, it is. These birds fly from the southern hemisphere all the way up to the arctic area to nest. One of the places they stop is Delaware Bay. So it's very important, both from the birds and also from the point of view, people want to see them. We've built observation platforms and photography platforms so the people don't disturb the birds, because feeding quickly, feeding in great amounts on eggs and other critters that live down there -- horseshoe crab eggs -- they don't have a lot of time, and they have to gain a lot of energy, so interrupting that migration could be harmful. So we have built observation blinds to keep that from happening.

The coastal waters of the State provide outstanding opportunities for all kinds of fishing, crabbing, weakfish and bluefish are here. We're trying to manage those to provide an abundance so that they continue for the future.

The bayshore area of the State supports one of the largest concentrations of shore birds and other species we spoke about. The New Jersey Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife has been actively involved in promoting eco- and nature-based tourism for many years. Working in conjunction with interested towns and counties and businesses, we have started talking about ecotourism from the point of view of viewing wildlife. We're talking about wildlife diversity tours and also observation opportunities, working with local communities and the counties. Jim Sciascia will talk a little bit more about that.

A well managed ecotourism program can provide opportunities for enjoying natural environment without depleting the resources, and that's what we're all here about.

An example is the Pequest trout hatchery. Fifty thousand visitors come to the hatchery. There are no food concessions there, and they spend their money in the local community. We have lots of educational opportunities there, and throughout the year these people attend.

In fact, we'll be having an open house at the fish hatchery here at the end of this month, and about 10,000 people will show up in one or two days up there to see the trout we are going to be stocking.

There are some things we could do to make it better. We can develop and operate a natural resource and education visitors' center on the banks of the Morris River. I think you'll be hearing about that from the folks from Cumberland County. We can develop a comprehensive GIS based guide to public lands in the State of New Jersey which doesn't exist. I'm talking about all public lands, including Federal lands. Encourage our county and State transportation officials, for example, to build fishing access sites next to every bridge abutment they replace. Fishermen spend, in Warren

County, \$20 million a year, just to fish in Warren County -- \$26 million in Sussex, about \$19 million in Hunterdon County. If we could encourage more overnight stays and encourage more fishing opportunities in those counties, it would help a lot.

To optimize benefits of ecotourism, good planning, which has been spoken about before, needs to be done. To accomplish this the State must take the lead role, more specifically, our own natural resources section working jointly with the Division of Travel and Tourism, which we are doing, there is no doubt that the use of our natural resource contributes to the economy.

Regions like Skylands, Gateways, Delaware River, the Shore region, greater Atlantic City region, it's almost endless what we could promote when it comes to viewing, using, and understanding the fish and wildlife resource. For example, beachcomber walks on weekends on Sea Isle City, the salt marsh safaris in Cumberland County, to fishing and canoeing in the Delaware River, to wild turkey hunting, which is some of the best in the country, and camping and moonlight walks on the Appalachian Trail in Sussex County. The ecotourism possibilities in our State are endless. Sussex County has one of the best places in the world to view migrating hawks. The County doesn't even know it exists. There isn't one single picture of somebody fishing on a lot of these county/government brochures to come visit the county.

So we can help them. I would suggest that we develop some sort of a team between DOT, Commerce -- for example, tourism -- DEP, to help local communities develop a strategy of developing their own resources and their own ecotourism programs.

Thank you so much.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: One of our purposes here today is to see what kind of legislative ideas may emerge, and your idea of a joint task force of sorts may be a good one. We'll investigate that. Thank you.

MR. McDOWELL: That was actually Carrie Radcliffes idea.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Okay.

SENATOR CIESLA: Bob, one question. One of the things I've always promoted, because I've seen it in other states, is what you mentioned, some sort of comprehensive guide to publicly owned lands, what type of access that provides. It drives me crazy when you go to another county, you have a boat and you don't know where you are going to put it in, don't know where you are going to park it. And yet the municipality may or may not have those type of facilities. So as a result, people generally don't take advantage of being that type of mobile, because it doesn't exist.

Any idea as to how much something like that may cost to develop, because I'm--

MR. McDOWELL: The guide itself?

SENATOR CIESLA: Yes, to take an initial stab at it. I think it should be something that should be ongoing, and I'm just wondering what the costs/benefit of trying to get that done now would be.

MR. McDOWELL: It wouldn't be much. I'd say \$20,000 or \$25,000. One of the things you have to do is find these places. Right now we're conducting a survey of existing boat launch and fishing access sites. For one thing, we want to develop some urban fishing access sites. That's one of the reasons we are doing it. So first of all, you have to know where it is, because they are all over the place.

SENATOR CIESLA: I agree.

MR. MCDOWELL: And then you have to look at where the needs are. That's why we're doing it. But I would say for under \$20,000 you could probably do this.

MR. SAVAGE: In fact, we probably could incorporate it in some of the existing publications that we do or some of the other agencies do. I don't see that as being a big problem.

SENATOR CIESLA: Good.

We should do it, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Yes, I think that's a great point, Senator. Maybe we can put that in some kind of a package we may put together. Take a little bit from each of your budgets and make sure we get this done.

Jim, let's go to you and ask you to be as concise as possible because we have a long list, and we're already behind.

Everybody can stay there and reshuffle, just to make it flow quickly.

The principal zoologist with the DEP Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife.

JAMES SCIASCIA: One of our objectives of this program is to create a statewide network of wildlife viewing areas. We are currently in the process of evaluating about 120 sites that have been nominated by the public for including in the watchable wildlife program. Of those, about 80 sites will be included in the guide.

We're going to develop a full color, 140-page publication that lists all these 80 sites. We've broken the State down into eight regions. We're going to combine some of these sites together to make two-day tours, with the intent of trying to keep people in some of these regions for longer periods of time.

We're also making money available to site owners and managers for site improvements. One of the things that was discussed is how do you increase recreation at the same time preserve these natural resources. Well, one of the criteria that is used to choose sites is whether or not it can stand additional visitation. Once a site is chosen, we hope to make grants available to communities to be able to put up the platforms, the interpretive signs, and make all the improvements that are going to bring people back to these areas.

By breaking the State into these regions and developing these tours, we hope to provide a platform that can be used on a regional basis where other nature-based tourism, other tourism amenities like where to go, where to stay, can be packaged together and hopefully some regional nature-based tourism packages can be developed

from this, using this as a platform. We're going to be looking to develop private and public partnerships to develop this kind of marketing packages.

We also hope to develop some kind of educational program around the viewing sites where viewing areas can be used as outdoor classrooms for people to come and learn about the wildlife and the environment.

Our ultimate goal as a resource agency is to build grass roots support for open space conservation. We're real excited about this program, and we think this can accomplish this. We're expanding recreational opportunities. We're educating the public about the wonderful natural resources that we have here that we need to protect for future generations, and we're also providing economic incentives to preserve open space.

We're real excited about this, and we hope this is going to be an ongoing dynamic program, even after the guide comes out. The guide will be out in the fall of

SENATOR KYRILLOS: That's great, Jim. We'll be looking forward to seeing the guide when it is unveiled. I congratulate you for your fine work and want to thank you also for asking me to join the watchable wildlife board. I hope I can make some contribution to it on behalf of the Committee.

Questions for any of these folks before we bring on some new people? (no response)

Keep up the great work. Thank you all.

MR. SCIASCIA: Thank you.

MR. McDOWELL: Thank you.

MR. SAVAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: I want to recognize George Howard, who is a former Division Director.

George, come on up for just a quick minute. We're going to take you out of order because you are such a great friend of this Committee and a former Director of the Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife, and now head up the New Jersey Sportsmen Coalition.

G E O R G E H O W A R D: State Federation of Sportsmens' Clubs.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: State Federation of Sportsmens' Clubs.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you very much, Senator. I certainly would like to express the Sportsmens' appreciation to the Committee for highlighting ecotourism in our State, and also for the opportunity to testify today concerning the benefits of ecotourism and particularly those related to hunting, fishing, and the wildlife resources to New Jersey's well-being.

I do have a copy of the report with a lot of figures, which I will hand over to you afterward.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Yes, please. We'll put it in the record.

MR. HOWARD: I won't go through them here, but I would like to make one or two comments.

First of all, in New Jersey, over \$1.5 billion of economic opportunity is generated annually by wildlife related activities.

On the national level, the economic impact of today's sportsmen and women amounted to more than the combined dollars generated by the recreational pursuits of golf, baseball, football, hockey, and skiing. Nationally there are more than twice as many fishermen as golfers, and there are more hunters than tennis players or skiers.

In New Jersey, sport fishing is the number one form of outdoor recreation. Ecotourism is an important part of the economic base of rural New Jersey. Fishing and hunting are key aspects of this equation. Properly managed, the benefits of ecotourism can be expanded while protecting the renewable natural resource base on which it is

founded. The State should be a key player in promoting ecotourism and in protecting the fish and wildlife resources on which a large part of our ecotourism is based.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Super, George. Well said, and thank you for being with us. Please let us have a copy of your written testimony.

MR. HOWARD: I will.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: We'll make sure it's in the full record.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Next, I want to ask to come before us the Cumberland County Planning Director, Stephen Kehs. Along with him, Jay Laubengeyer from the South Jersey Nature Conservancy and the Stockton Alliance.

Please have a seat.

It seems to me, from--

STEPHEN KEHS: If it's okay, may I let Jay go first?

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Oh, surely.

MR. KEHS: I have several people with me who would also like to say a few words.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Why don't you bring them up now if there are some seats there, and introduce them to us all.

MR. KEHS: With me today, Senator, are several people from Cumberland County, who I think will help to provide the Committee with a better perspective on the issue of balance and bring the issue of ecotourism to the Committee from a number of different points of view.

First of all, Brian Tomlin is with me. Brian is the Director of the Millville Development Corporation and the Millville Chamber of Commerce. Brian is going to give you a perspective that I think is unusual on this issue, and that is the perspective of an urban community with regard to ecotourism.

Jane Deleno represents Citizens United to Protect the North River and its tributaries, and Jane is going to talk about some of the conservation issues.

Elaine Raines is the owner and manager of the Ship John Inn, on the beautiful Cohancy River in Cumberland County, in Greenwich, New Jersey.

And also, Tim Brill, who is the Assistant Planning Director in the Department and our chief liaison on the County Ag Development Board. Tim is going to talk a little bit about some of the agricultural perspectives in Cumberland County in regard to this issue.

But as I said, perhaps we can defer first to Jay Laubengeyer for his comments.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you, Stephen. Let me just say from the outset, from what I understand about what is going on in Cumberland County, you have kind of provided a model at the county level for what maybe we ought to be doing at the State level. I applaud you, and I'm looking forward to hearing more about it.

Jay, do you want to lead off?

JAY LAUBENGEYER: Good morning, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today. We had the great fortune to work with Cumberland County in their ecotourism planning efforts. I'll defer any experiences that we've shared with them to their presentation.

I'm kind of wearing two hats this morning. I'm representing the Nature Conservancy, and our Delaware Bayshore office. I'm also representing Michael Catania through his representation of the Stockton Alliance. So I'd like to offer two separate testimonies to that effect.

The Nature Conservancy supports the approach of developing ecotourism to achieve a balance between resource conservation and compatible economic initiatives. The Conservancy believes (tape malfunction, portion of testimony not recorded) the

ecotourism industry should incorporate appropriate measures for long-term protection of the resources that people come to visit.

The Nature Conservancy is committed to helping local communities find ways to create a balance between natural resource protection and economic vitality. The Conservancy believes that truly long-term conservation of the State's natural resources depends on prudent conservation measures combined with a well-planned development of ecotourism facilities. We feel that a well-managed ecotourism effort is the best way to achieve this goal.

Based on our work in the Delaware Bayshore region, the Conservancy believes that a sound ecotourism industry should be based upon four basic principals:

The first is that the effort should result in direct economic benefit to the local communities. Secondly, ecotourism should improve the everyday quality of life of the local residents. Visitation to natural areas should in now way result in the detrimental loss of natural qualities or a negative impact on biological resources, and lastly, a successful ecotourism program should lead to additional protection of the State's natural resources.

The Conservancy has taken steps to provide visitation facilities in several of our preserves. The Conservancy is proposing to establish and improve existing public access facilities such as self-guided nature trails, observation platforms, small scale parking areas and interpretive signs at seven of the Conservancy's preserves in the Delaware Bayshore region.

This project is known as the Cape Cumberland Natuer Pathway. The goal of the nature pathway is to link together in a cohesive fashion our outdoor and nature preserve in Jennings Township, our Bennett Bogs Preserve and Cape May Migratory Bird Refuge in Lower Township; Manumussskin River Preserve in Morris River Township; the Nanticoke Creek Preserve in Millville; Gandy's Beach Preserve in Down Township; and Willow Grove Lake Preserve located in Vineland and Pitts Grove Township.

Appropriate facilities and suitable locations at each of these preserves will allow for public use and enjoyment in order to foster the support for conservation in the local communities without adversely affecting resources found there.

To act as essential anchor of this system, the Conservancy is developing a Delaware Bayshore Center. The Bayshore Center will be staffed full time by Nature Conservancy employees and will be a location for detailed information about the Cape Cumberland Nature Pathway, including a map and brochure describing this system. Also, a guide to local business services available to Pathway visitors will be prepared and distributed from the Center. Public education programs at the Bayshore Center will highlight the natural habitats and features found along the Cape Cumberland Nature Pathway.

We should be careful not to promote or market destinations until we have services available for tourists. If visitors are attracted to areas without proper facilities, it may be detrimental to ecotourism efforts. The visitor potentially could inadvertently harm or degrade the habitat, and also be annoyed with the lack of services.

The development of ecotourism is an exciting opportunity to marry the protection of our natural resources with developments compatible economies.

We look forward to continuing our participation in this approach, and we applaud the Committee's efforts here today.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Jay, thank you very much.

MR. LAUBENGEYER: I'm representing Michael Catania, also, who represents the Stockton Alliance. Could I read a short testimony from him?

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Well, if you could just summarize it quickly--

MR. LAUBENGEYER: Okay.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: --because we're running behind. We have a lot of people who will be upset when they are not going to be able to speak, and some may not be able to.

MR. LAUBENGEYER: Sure.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: I know that Mike has done an awful lot of work with the Stockton Alliance to promote this issue in Cumberland County and the environs. We know that.

Go ahead.

MR. LAUBENGEYER: Okay, very shortly. The Alliance is a group of the leading business and environmental organizations in the State of New Jersey. There are 18 of us as members.

We see ourselves as a facility of these types of issues, to bring together various interests from around the State in developing ecotourism. To that effect, I would like to just announce that we're holding our workshop on May 10, 1996 at Stockton State College -- Richard Stockton College of New Jersey -- and we have a good array of panelists who are experts in each of the various fields involving ecotourism. We look forward to continuing this dialogue at that workshop. We would like to invite the Committee and anyone else to attend.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: What was the date on that again?

MR. LAUBENGEYER: May 10.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: May 10, good.

Mike has a written statement. Let us have it and we'll put it in the transcript.

Thank you for all your work. Congratulations.

Stephen, who wants to go next?

MR. KEHS: Okay, I'd like to begin by calling on Brian Tomlin, from the Millville Chamber of Commerce for some remarks.

BRIAN TOMLIN: Thank you, Steve.

Good morning Mr. Chairman, and thank you for this opportunity to speak before the New Jersey State Senat's Natural Resources Committee on the topic of Ecotourism.

As Steve mentioned, my name is Brian Tomlin. I'm the Executive Director of the Millville Development Corporation as well as the Chamber of Commerce, and we're with revitalizing business in the center area and the business environments in the community.

Millville, which is known as the Holly City of America, owes its very founding to the abundance of natural resources in its backyard. The convergence of rivers and highways, coupled with vast amounts of silica sand, led to its formation as both a mill town and a glass town. These days manufacturing enterprises are still very important to us, but, as is the case all over New Jersey, we are definitely in a trransition to a more service oriented economy.

Fortunately, wer are in an ideal position to gain a positive advantage from the budding ecotourism movement. We want to be partners in Cumberland County's plan to bring tourist dollars to our area by showcasing the bounty Mother Nature has brought to us.

Within our city, we feature the nationally recognized Holly Farm, Wheaton Village and Union Lake, all great attractions in and of themselves, and better yet when appreciated as a grouping. Within a few minutes drive are Cumberland County's vast wetlands, nationally recognized wild and scenic rivers, bald eagle habitat, fish and game reserves, farm markets, bird watching areas, and historical sites.

It's somewhat amazing to realize that here, in the heart of the northeast corridor, remains an areas so undistrubed, yet so readily accessible to those who would enjoy these unspoiled attractions.

Because of these factors, our group recently sent more than 600 letters to companies which focus on sporting and tourism activities. We've had a positive response

from firms ranging from the manufacturing of fishing flies for mail order, to the building of recreational boats. We're looking for such firms as these which are a natural match.

The City of Millville is located at the convergence of major highways, notably, Route 55, Route 47, and Route 49. We are also the portal to the federally designated wild and scenic Maurice River and its tributaries, the Manumuskin, Menantico, and Muskee. Because of our ideal location, Millville can become a gateway for ecotourism. We already have abundant services for visitors, including lodging, restaurants, fuel, and all other supplies necessary for either a brief or a long stay.

These amenities make Millville a natural spot for a welcome center, a waterfront park, ecofestivals, and fishing and boating opportunities, which would provide visitors with a variety of experiences to help them enjoy the bounty that nature has all around us.

Senator, the work of your Committee in boosting ecotourism is most appreciated by those of us who are looking for new avenues of economic development. The State must play a leading role in channeling funds to our communities to help us meet our goals. Ecotourism is a way we can help revitalize our urban centers as well as our rural areas. I realize that funding is scarce, but if we pool existing programs, each of which contributes to some aspect of this effort, we can assemble the resources we need.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to bring these to your attention.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you.

MR. KEHS: Next up is Jane Galeto, President of Citizens United.

JANE MORTON GALETO: Senator Kyrillos, Committee members, and guests, as you know my name is Jane Morton Galeto. I'm president of a watershed association in Cumberland County, New Jersey. I also serve on a number of DEP councils. I chair the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee. As such, I sit on the Fish and Game Council. I'm on the Freshwater Wetlands Advisory Council.

I serve on Stockton Alliance, which Jay introduced you to today, and New Jersey Audubon Society's Board, South Jersey Land Trust Board. Now I think my two minutes is up. (laughter)

From a conservation perspective, ecotourism can create positive partnerships for both business and environmental communities. The natural resource base of ecotourism provides a platform of common ground for both environmental and economic interests. Furthering the public's awareness of the reliance of economic community on preserved resources strengthens the conservationist's position by fostering advocacy of natural resources.

Any ecotourism program must educate the public about the resources they are enjoying. The more the visitors learn the less superficial and the more sustained their interest will be in repeat visits or in referring others to come and enjoy the same experience which they have enjoyed. Also, the more visitors learn, the more likely they are to participate in the shared responsibility of stewardship.

The Watchable Wildlife Project, which you have heard about today in which our Nongame Committee has been instrumental, will ultimately be a showcase for New Jersey's natural world, so I really think it is something that behooves the Committee to stay very much on top of.

There needs to be coordination of an ecotourism plan, either statewide or regionally. A well-conceived ecotourism plan must seek to manage visitors in a way that minimizes adverse impacts to natural resources and preserves and protects open space. For the program to have longevity, there has to be predictability for visitors. Interpretation and recreational programs need to be regularly scheduled. As tourists in the summer, you know how frustrating it is to get there and there is nothing happening or you just missed it. It really makes you nuts, especially if you have just driven, and you've just heard for the last two hours, "How many more miles, Mommy?" (laughter)

Open space areas must be staffed, maintained, and managed. While funding is available for acquisition of space, dollars are scarce to nonexistent for interpretation, education, trail maintenance, cleanup, and overall management. The coordination of a well-designed plan is the only way to avoid the chaos that plagues some of our nation's most cherished tourist locations.

I would strongly urge the Committee to look into this Teaming with Wildlife Program. I've given Sue Cosel an outline of that program and what it is about. Essentially, it's a program that will take revenues from outdoor products, user type fees for recreation-based activities, and take those moneys and use them in a similar way to the moneys that are used for hunting and fishing equipment. It is a Federal initiative. It would go a long way toward funding the interpretation that has to be done in cooperation -- cooperatively with these types of programs.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Where was that money from?

MS. GALETO: The moneys-- It is proposed to be generated from a fee that would come on recreational types of equipment. I've given you a list of the numbers of conservation groups and corporations that support that initiative. It would be similar to when someone purchases a gun or fishing equipment today, a few cents of all of that goes to the Federal government and then comes back in land and water conservation dollars, like Pitney Robertson. It would be mirrored on that.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Okay, so you've given us that proposal.

MS. GALETO: That's right. You have that.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Keep going. I'm sorry.

MS. GALETO: Okay. The Stockton Alliance, as you've heard, is hosting an ecotourism workshop on May 10. We would like, very much, for you, Senator Kyrillos to come and give some welcoming remarks that day. Jay and myself are the co-organizers of that event. Sally Price, from the Pinelands Alliance is also here, and I

believe there-- At one point in time there were at least six Alliance members in the room. So you have already heard about that.

As a resident of Cumbreland County, I would be remiss if I didn't share with you the fact that Cumberland County has vast undeveloped areas with scenic vistas, nationally famous rivers, pineland forests, near tropical birds, shore birds, horsehoe crabs, bald eagles, unparalleled national and international treasures for visitors to enjoy. And as a conservationist I would like to see those visitors leave only footprints.

But we are also a somewhat empoverished area, and what some people view open space as an impediment to economic progress, so in addition to footprints, a few greenbacks would go a long way toward boosting local advocacy for open space.

Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you.

MR. KEHS: Elaine Raines is the owner of the Ship John Inn on the Cohancy River in Greenwich.

E L A I N E R A I N E S: Mr. Chairman, Senators, guests, I've been asked to speak on behalf of the small business owner of Cumberland County.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Let me just interrupt you and ask, whoever is remaining to be as quick as possible. To be quite honest, we weren't planning for everybody from Cumberland to be here. We were going to go down there, and I'm sure we will hear from now.

But go ahead. I don't want to interrupt you. I want to hear your message.

MS. RAINES: On behalf of the small business owner of Cumberland County, four years ago I moved to the county in New Jersey because of the ecotourism opportunities I foresaw.

The restaurant-- While searching for the appropriate name for the restaurant site, I read the story of the Ship John Lighthouse, and it ocured to me that this was a special tale which not only tied the name of the restuarant to the historic village of

Greenwich, but connected it to the scenic waters of the Cohancy River and the nearby Delaware Bay.

Incidentally, the restaurant is named for the lighthouse which marks the place where the ship John struck a shoal and was cut through by the ice in 1797.

Greenwich is seven years older than Philadelphia. Not many people are aware of that. Unlike its younger cousin Philadelphia, much of Greenwich remains today as it was when the earliest settlers built their proud homes beneath the silver maples and buttonwoods that still line Great Street. And unlike the restored Americana of Williamsburg, Greenwich is more than just a charming facade, but a living thing.

Some of the events we have organized at the restaurant include sunset cruises along the Cohancy River and the Delaware Bay incorporating a narration of the natural and historic facets of the area. We have combined the cruises with either five-course gourmet dinners in the restaurant or other things, such as clam bakes, oyster roasts, pig roasts, and so forth. We've even done some unique boxed lunches for the New Jersey Nature Conservancy.

Historic tours through the village -- guided tours -- are arranged -- horse drawn hayrides through the town, visits to antique and gift shops, tours of the old stone tavern, as well as an overview of the village can be enjoyed by every age; the point being that there are many opportunities for ecotourism even in a little tiny village such as Greenwich, which is in a corner of our county.

Our concerns -- my personal concern, and I suppose some of those in the local area -- are that we don't have enough bed and breakfasts, and those who might be interested in opening such properties have to live up to the many, many regulatory requirements, which are difficult in historic buildings.

One of the other things we have done at the restaurant is to provide a boat and breakfast opportunity, for people to stay. So we've tried to be innovative and creative in bringing people to our county and to the State of New Jersey.

MR. KEHS: Okay, thank you, Elaine.

Tim Brill is going to give just a couple of quick comments about agriculture, and then we'll wrap it up.

TIM BRILL: Thank you. I just want to emphasize that in Cumberland County, we believe the best way to preserve farmland is by preserving the economic viability of the agricultural industry. In that regard, the ecotourism initiative that we're involved with has a tremendous amount of potential. Cumberland County leads the State in terms of the direct sales of agricultural products. It represents about one-third of our local county economy.

We believe, initially, the ecotourism initiative can be an important marketing tool for Cumberland County. We're planning to release a farm market guide this spring. It will call attention to the dozens of outlets for fresh produce. We also emphasize pick-you-own operations, as well as the potential for an urban farm market to provide another avenue and outlet of local resources, as well as the chance to emphasize our ethnic diversity in the county.

We have a number of special events already in place that can be heightened, enlarged, or expanded to be more of an impact on the agricultural industry. We have an ambitious farm land preservation program in place to work on the resource protection emphasis.

We also have something that many other parts of the State don't have, vision and the time to make a difference. With your help, I'm sure we'll be successful in promoting an educational theme, as well as these opportunities to bring additional market forces to the agricultural industry in Cumberland County.

MR. KEHS: Thank you, Tim.

Senator, we have brought a copy of our plan with us that we will leave with you. It has over 90 specific recommendations included in it. We'd like to thank you and the members of the Committee for inviting us today. And we'd also like to acknowledge

the leadership that we've gotten from folks like this in Cumberland County, from the Nature Conservancy, from Assemblyman Asselta's office, because without that kind of assistance, putting our plan together would not have been possible.

So thank you very much.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Steve, let me congratulate you. I'm sure it was no easy task to get all these people together in one room and finally on the same page or the same hundred pages, whatever it is. I applaud you. We'll continue to learn more from you, and I think your last representative is on target. You all do have the vision and seem to be making a real difference.

We thank you very much.

Our next witness was to be Linda Morgan, and we're going to ask her to wait just a little bit, because our colleague from the Senate, Senator Bill Schluter is here from Mercer and Hunterdon and Warren counties, and he wants to introduce some constituents from Warren County, who we were due to hear from a little bit later, but we're going to hear from them now in deference to their State Senator and our friend and colleague, Bill Schluter.

Then we're going to go to Linda Morgan, from the Regional Plan Association.

Bill, thank you and welcome.

SENATOR WILLIAM E. SCHLUTER: Thank you, members of the Committee. I appreciate very much your willingness to take these people a little bit out of order because of another commitment. In exchange for that, they have promised to be very, very brief and just give you a summary of their testimony.

But also representing that area, we can suggest that members of the Legislature recognize that next August 5 and 6 is going to farmers' legislative day in Warren County. Warren County is going to be the host. So if you want to come up and

see beautiful Warren County, the Delaware Water Gap, and all of the nice things that these people are going to talk to you about, put that on your calendar to come up.

We have Freeholder Director Susan Dickey, who is right here. John Celentano, Barbara Langley, and Wilma Pride, who will give very brief statements about the virtues and the beauty of Warren County.

Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Senator, thank you very much. Thanks for your interest.

Madame Freeholder, welcome.

FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR SUSAN DICKEY: Thank you very much. Thanks for having us here this morning. I brought you some brochures from Warren County. They do have a picture of a fisherman in them.

I define ecotourism as a means of environmental protection, outdoor recreation, and economic opportunity. New Jerseyans have supported open space and farmland preservation through the approval of Greenacre Bond Issues totaling over \$1.14 billion, and it is presently the current policy of this State to encourage environmental education, the protection of natural and recreational features, and to protect critical natural, historic, and scenic resources.

The issue is very simple, as I see it. It's to make the obvious connection between the economic benefit of ecotourism, which is available through the promotion of many, varied natural resources. Your nature tourists are seeking education or knowledge, adventure, competition, and environmental awareness. Their activities cover a broad range including hiking, backpacking, camping, canoeing, fishing, hunting, nature photography, nature tours, birding, biking, historic exploration, and more.

The State should really think of ecotourism as public open space and recreation as elements of public infrastructure, which, like our roads, our schools, and our

bridges, must be provided and maintained, because ecotourism is an investment in our future.

Ecotourism provides jobs as well as protectin natural resources, and it encourages the entrepreneur and furnishes customers to the small businesses. It supports and supplements a local economy without a burden. It's the type of business that can be funded through corporate events such as sponsored bike tours or races through rural areas, or sponsored by nonprofit organizations, which often organize historic, fall foliage, and winery tours.

Today in the many family's interests, ecotourism activities fit the lifestyle of these years and often close to home recreation which helps to keep local dollars here in New Jersey.

It also represents farming, as you have already heard, and as the Senator has already said, we do invite you up to Warren County this August. Whether it's farm markets and pick-your-own excursions or working farms as a place to spend your vacation, farming is the culmination of open space and a productive piece of land.

Recreational saltwater fishing, you have already heard about.

Warren County is the home to the Pequest Trout Hatchery, as Director McDowell has said. We stock all the New Jersey rivers with trout. We have also the most pristine waters in this State for trout fishing. We support black bear, the best hawk watching reserve on the East Coast, nesting bald eagles at the Delaware Water Gap, and we have the remains of the Morris Canal and history from Native-American Indians to Revolutionary War events.

In Warren County alone, freshwater fishermen spent over \$51 million in 1991 in fishing related goods and services, and they supported jobs providing over \$10 million in earnings. These dollars may be small in comparison to the other efforts in this State to support business, but to a rural economy, they represent safety from overdevelopment, and with ecotourism supported and encouraged by the State, the rural

counties in this State can avoid this type of destructive growth and grow in a measured and economic way that supports the local economy.

We're one of the most densely populated states, and we need to recognize the rural counties and protect them from the fate of their urbanized sister counties.

We are the last frontier in New Jersey and provide the historic perspective of our origins as a garden state. We also protect the water supplies for all the drinking water in this State.

We should be encouraged, as a rural county, to be what we are and not told to become something we are not, and that is overly developed.

Wildlife recreation, fishing, and hunting in New Jersey represents over 75,000 jobs. You've heard that it also provides State and Federal taxes, and it also provides \$5 billion in retail sales. In short, it's the protected promotion of our natural resources in a limited commodity that grows in value daily. It makes good business sense for the State of New Jersey to seek ecotourism as a means of economic growth.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Freeholder, thank you very much for your eloquent remarks--

FREEHOLDER DICKEY: Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: --and for all you are doing up there in Warren County. Good luck to you.

I'm going to ask the next three folks from Warren to limit your comments to just a minute each. I apologize for that. I'm going to have to crack down on everybody else throughout the remainder of the hearing. We probably were a little overly generous at the outset, because we're just not going to get everybody in.

If you just identify yourself, give us a quick minute, and your written testimony can be made part of the official record.

JOHN J. CELENTANO: Thank you, Senators. I appreciate this opportunity to address ecotourism as an economically viable endeavor and as a means to assist in the preservation of our dwindling rural areas and agricultural lands.

I'm going to jump around here.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Yes. And you are?

MR. CELENTANO: My name is John Celentano, and I'm Chairman of the Hope Township Environmental Commission, and I'm a member of Warren County's Economic Development Council.

Ecotourism is a many faceted industry and can result in a great number of benefits to what's left of our rural areas. It can be seen as a departure from and an alternative to current methods of economic development that have focused on growth for growth's sake. Instead of promoting development that results in ever increasing demands for services from local governments, ecotourism can focus on enhancing and preserving the industries that are already in place in these areas such as agriculture and tourism.

If approached correctly it can result in protecting the quality of life that is now enjoyed in our rural areas and will also promote an atmosphere and a fertile environment for many entrepreneurial opportunities, which provide for real economic growth.

The countryside of New Jersey is its heritage, and we are too small and densely populated to continue our current course of action in terms of development. The suburban sprawl that is overtaking New Jersey is resulting in ever increasing demands for government services, increasing taxes, and cost of living, and is decreasing our quality of life.

Basically, we must change our emphasis in terms of economic development, especially in the northwestern corner of our State. We have the infrastructure in place for good economic development that will support and enhance our

agricultural industry and our tourism industry and maintain our open spaces and still provide economic growth.

Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you very much. Thanks for summarizing your remarks. We got the message.

BARBARA K. LANGLEY: I'll try to summarize mine, too. My name is Barbara Langley. I reside in Warren County, but I am also President of Skylands Tourism Council, and I am also Vice President of New Jersey Travel Industry Associations, so my remarks will be to the Skylands area, which is a five-county region.

The Skylands is located in the northwest section of New Jersey and was incorporated in 1982 as the official regional representative of the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism. You've heard facts and figures already about the State, however, in Skylands tourism is about a \$2.5 billion and hosts more than 1.5 million visitors annually. This includes day trippers, camp grounds, B&B, hotels, and motels.

Campgrounds: unfortunately, no one is here from the campgrounds today because they are at a conference. Campgrounds is one example of a major industry that depends on sound ecotourism. In the Skylands, there are 3700 private camp sites available, with a 47 percent occupancy rate with three people on a camp site. On holiday weekends, top camp grounds are filled. Campers spend approximately \$40 per person outside of the campground on a daily basis. On a hot day in August, it is estimated that over 150,000 campers are in the Skylands region.

The Skylands depends upon a sound ecotourism policy, because over 53,000 people are employed in this industry, which generates \$175 million in State taxes, and about \$61 million in local taxes.

Down country roads you will find other things than fishing. You will find flower festivals, equestrian events, apple picking, farms and farm markets, country fairs, shad fishing, and even herb gardens. In wintertime -- this is a four-season area, in the

Skylands -- and in the wintertime there is skiing and ice boating and ice fishing and cross country skiing. There are national parks, county parks, State parks, and municipal parks.

One of the things in the Skylands, of course, is the Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area, which generates about 4.6 million visitors annually, and is the eleventh most visited park in the United States.

The Council would like to give you their definition of ecotourism. Ecotourism is the aggregate of social, educational, and cultural conditions that influence our environment, tourism related business, and in turn our communities. The Council believes that the policy resolved here will ultimately determine form and survival for our communities. Therefore, one of the first things that they suggest would be an inventory of each of the six regions to determine the economic and environmental impact.

Also we believe firmly that the consumer, the businessperson, and the environmentalist must be educated so that each has a better respect and understanding of the other's position.

Skylands of New Jersey looks to you to provide vision planners through the 21st Century and a sound, fair policy that encompasses all facets. We are willing to work with the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism, and you, of course, and also with the New Jersey Travel Industry Association.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thanks for your suggestion on the inventory.

Finally, as we swap chairs--

WILMA E. FRY: Thank you for the opportunity. I'm Wilma Fry, and I'm speaking for the Highlands Coalition. The Highlands Coalition is an association of more than 75 local, regional, State and national citizens' organizations working to protect the Highlands region in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.

The Highlands in New Jersey is part of the nationally significant link in the Appalachian Chain, and it includes parts of seven counties: Bergen, Passaic, Morris, Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon, and Somerset, and covers almost 750,000 acres.

The Highlands Coalition has as one of its major strategies, it advocates the development of a Highlands ecotourism rural recreation economy, based on the sensitive stewardship of natural resources and rural landscape values.

We are proud of the wealth of natural and cultural resources that exist in the Highlands. There are extensive mature forests, the most diverse ecosystem in New Jersey, reservoirs that provide half the State's water, hundreds of lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, country roads, beautiful farms, antique villages, historic iron mines, and Federal, State, and county parks, to name a few.

However, experts in ecotourism emphasize that tourism and the environment are not merely interrelated, but they are interdependent. The viability of tourism, rather than conflicting with environmental conservation actually demands it. Otherwise visitor satisfaction will be reduced as the inherent appeal of the tourism setting is eroded.

Expert after expert points out that for future management, conservation must take first priority, and that ecotourism and rural recreational tourism will be a successful industry only if the natural and cultural resources upon which it is based are protected. The first rule and really the only rule is do not kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

It is clear, however, our efforts to protect the environment are not adequate. The Highlands today teeter on the brink of irreversible degradation. We see a lack of permanent protection of the watersheds that supply half of New Jersey's citizens with drinking water. Urban sprawl is spreading over the landscape along the major transportation corridors. There is no effective management of this growth, and one urbanized area merges into the other in a continuous strip of unsightly development.

The extensive mature forests of the region are being fragmented, chopped into ever smaller pieces by development, and the migratory song birds and the wildlife that depends on these forests are declining. Farmland is covered with castles in cornfields as the former owners leave the State. Intense residential development has degraded lakes like Greenwood lake and Lake Hopatocong.

The most important question regarding ecotourism is how to protect the resource on which it depends. If we are serious about protecting--

SENATOR KYRILLOS: You need to kind of finish up at this point.

MS. FREY: All right. Anyway, sustainable ecotourism requires the kind of regional resource planning and management that the Highlands Coalition has been advocating for the past five years and it needs to be started now.

We have a few recommendations: One, that there be serious implementation of New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan; that there be a mechanism established for planning regionally in the Highlands. One municipality can't provide a sustainable ecotourism economy.

As part of this regional planning process, State land holding agencies must prepare detailed management plans for their lands based on carrying capacity and including in-depth habitat assessments.

Then there are a number of other recommendations that we have, including increasing the rate of public land acquisition in the Highlands, expanding the natural area systems, and providing more backing for sustainable ecotourism program, and paying a great deal of attention to the scenic and esthetic resources of the region.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you all very much. I'm looking forward to getting up there to Warren County. You ought to be very proud of your State Senator, Senator Schluter. We applaud all you are doing up there.

Bill, thank you very much.

Freeholder, thank you.

FREEHOLDER DICKEY: Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Next up, let me bring up Linda Morgan, from the Regional Plan Association.

Linda has been doing a lot of work on the West Millford Ecotourism Project, and she seems to have found that elusive balance there in that town.

LINDA P. MORGAN: Good afternoon. Thank you very much for having us here today, Senator Kyrillos and Committee. My name is Linda Morgan. I'm the Director of the New Jersey office of Regional Plan Association, located in Newark. I'm joined this afternoon by George Spence who is of the planning board of West Millford in Passaic County. We're happy to be able to testify to you today about a unique nature-based tourism development process that we have been undertaking in the rural highlands township of West Milford.

For the past year we have been working collaboratively to evaluate the potential for facilitating compact development in town center, while at the same time preserving environmental resources in the watershed by transferring development potential into the town center.

This project actually represents the first time that the City of Newark, which owns 35,000 acres of watershed land in the Highlands, has sat down with one of the townships in the watershed to try to find the appropriate balance between economic development and environmental conservation.

The goal here was to try to maintain a decent ratable base by developing in a compact form, while also preserving natural resources in open space. This project has been guided throughout the last year by a 25-member advisory committee which includes township officials, county government, citizens, representatives of the Highlands Coalition, office of State planning and DEP. We have also been aided by three-dimensional computer aided design from the New School for Social Research.

One aspect of the project has been to look at possibilities for building on the area's strengths by marketing its natural and recreational resources for tourism development. Last year we actually attended a conference sponsored by DEP, the State Division of Travel and Tourism, and Warren County. This conference included a presentation on how local, mostly rural communities, could inventory their natural historic and economic assets and identify opportunities and constraints for coordinating and marketing these assets.

We actually took from Warren County this process and applied it in West Milford, using a workbook that was developed by Clemson University, which I have brought today, and the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. This is entitled, "Hometown Discovery, a Development Process for Tourism." Given the remarks of the earlier speaker from the Fish and Wildlife Division, I think that this workbook would actually provide a very good basis on which you could form an interagency partnership for strategic planning statewide that involves both local input and then State and regional tourism development, because it is a very good step-by-step process on how to do this. We found it to be a very useful tool in helping the town focus on the range of valuable resources they retain in West Milford: access to 80 lakes, trout fishing, hiking trails, equestrian centers, etc. You have heard a lot about that from other counties. And just listing the resources and the assets that West Milford had helped them develop a marketable image.

It also pointed out the gaps in the way the State currently directs its tourism resources to the Highlands region. For example, we found that West Milford, while it's known to be part of the Highlands Region is listed by the State as part of the Gateway Region.

Promotional materials for the region do not list any of West Milford's myriad attractions in its brochures. We believe that there really should be better

coordination between State and regional tourism entities and the locally based attractions and commerce groups such as we were developing and now exist in West Milford.

Our ad-hoc tourism group came up with a series of recommendations for local and area wide tourism development which we have shared earlier with Senator Kyrillos' staff to try to help you determine how we were able to finalize the recommendations from this booklet.

I thought it would be good for George to just say a few words on that process before we conclude.

GEORGE SPENCE: Good afternoon, Senators. Thank you. My name is George Spence. I want to thank Linda for working with our township.

As you see, I represent the Township of West Milford. I'm a Planning Board member. I am the Planning Board Liaison to the Township Environmental Commission. I am the Chairman of the Regional Plan Association's Highland Demonstration Project, and Chairman of the newly formed Resource Development Committee, which came from that project.

West Milford is one of the largest municipals in New Jersey, with an area of nearly 84 square miles. Within 84 square miles, more than 55 square miles, or 60 percent of our area is open space. The principal land holders are: the City of Newark, the State of New Jersey, and the County of Passaic.

West Milford is a tier-5, or environmentally sensitive planning zone. We are developing a town center of roughly 2.5 square miles, and we house nearly 8000 or one-third of our township population of about 25,000.

The township also supports the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, but we do have to maintain a sustainable economy. West Milford is a treasure trove of natural wonders. Within our borders lie hundreds of miles of hiking trails, crosscountry ski trails, mountain bike trails. We have excellent trout streams. We have the Pequonock River. We have black bear, beaver, bobcats, all wildlife that has been

mentioned. I don't want to repeat anything that anybody has already said. We have Greenwood Lake. We have sailing, motorboating, etc., Long Pond State Park, Abraham Hewitt State Park, Green Turtle Pond, which is fish, game, and wildlife.

You can hunt, swim, fish, camp, etc. in West Milford. We're an hour from Manhattan; we have an airport; we do not have any recognition.

Last year, when the State Planning office received a map of the State's natural resources, West Milford was not mentioned. Long forgotten mining towns, farm towns were shown on the map. Towns such as Posteville, Monksville -- which the Governor will be at today -- but not West Milford. Our little hamlets are mentioned.

DEP's own magazine mentioned West Milford in an article on special resources in the Skylands. Photographs to illustrate West Milford were taken in Orange County, New York State. (laughter) We're a beautiful town, and we're proud to show it off and share its history and natural beauty. It will be a principal task of the resource development committee to package and market our town, however, as a community with limited resources but incredible assets, we need help. We need the State's help; we need the county's help.

We need help to get the word out that we exist to show what we have to offer. The township believes, with proper stewardship and planning -- and we are a very environmentally sensitive town, and we have a tough time developing with our wetlands, our slopes and all of our open space.

We'd like to bring enjoyment and enrichment to all our visitors, but we also need to develop a stronger economy for our local residents.

Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: I guess we would just say, we would be happy to work with your Committee in any way with anyone who is interested in the process that we undertook in West Milford.

Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you very much, Linda. We would be interested in knowing more about the process and see how we could suggest to other municipalities the very same process. I'm not quite sure how we would do that, but we ought to sit down and figure out how we market the approach that you undertook. Everybody in the room, at least, knows about West Milford now, and I think you are going to have some visitors as a result of your testimony today. (laughter)

MR. SPENCE: We hope so.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Mr. Spence, very well done.

SENATOR CIESLA: Is it on the county map? I've got the county map and I'm looking for it.

MS. MORGAN: It's Passaic County.

SENATOR CIESLA: Oh, okay.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you.

MR. SPENCE: Thank you very much.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Great, thank you. Great job.

We want to bring up next, Terrence Moore, the Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission, and Bill Harrison from the Pinelands Commission, and Sally Price, from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance.

Thank you all very much for being here. After you conclude, Debra Waxman, from the Travel Industry Association.

Welcome, are you going to start off, Mr. Director -- however you decide?

T E R R E N C E D. M O O R E: Thank you, Senator Kyrillos. I have some prepared statements that I am not going to read, but just want to touch on two points during my presentation. Hopefully that will be a very brief one.

I did want to indicate to the Committee some things that are being undertaken right now in the New Jersey Pinelands, and I am always pleased to come

before a Senate Committee representing the premier ecological resource of this State, which is, of course, the Pinelands National Reserve.

We are undertaking our own initiatives with regard to ecotourism and interpretation of the vast resources that represent 22 percent of this State's land area. This is being done in cooperation with the National Park Service and the Department of Environmental Protection, with the Pinelands Commission being involved in that particular role as a participating State agency.

You are going to see, very shortly, within the New Jersey Pinelands small visitation centers, the first one, hopefully at Double Trouble State Park in Ocean County. You are going to see a regional identity within that area with signage programs. We are talking about funding. This one is being funded by ISTEA funds through the Department of Transportation. You will now come to the New Jersey Pinelands with a welcome sign. You will traverse through the beautiful Pinelands village of Green Bank, on the Mullica River. You will also have signs to guide you to and interpret the variety of resources that that region is particularly famous for.

In concert with that, and I think, a very new initiative and a very important initiative of the Pinelands Commission is to begin to look at our rural communities and to identify with them the types of economic opportunities that can fit with an ecotourism activity, the types of economic opportunities that can fit with respect to the variety of resources that exist within the Pinelands National Reserve.

Senator Kyrillos, you and I have had an opportunity to meet on the subject, also Assemblyman Asselta. We are looking for programs to capitalize on the natural resources of this region. As I mentioned, ecotourism is one that we believe is an important facet of that.

I'm pleased to report to both of you today that in our own discussions with area legislators, with local officials, and with others who have come to understand the

meaning of this particular approach, we are finding a great deal of support in the southern portion of the State for this initiative.

I have in my comments -- and I won't go over them -- provided you with some suggestions for a framework for ecotourism within the State of New Jersey, but particularly within the most sensitive portion of this State, the Pinelands National Reserve. The issues are different than elsewhere. The resources are fragile, and they do need to be the subject of a very careful planning effort if, indeed, the economic viability of ecotourism within that region is going to endure.

It also, and I think many others have touched upon it here today-- This is an effort that involves a consensus of a variety of interests within any region that it may be undertaken in. It is not just we in government, and it's not just we in private enterprise. It is going to involve the consensus of those in the academic community that have expertise in ecosystem management and ecological resource protection. It's also going to involve the people who own private property within the region, so that their rights to private property in terms of trespass are respected, and that the access that is given to these particular resources is done under a very carefully controlled and managed basis.

That, too, also goes to those facilities that surround the reason that people come. There is a need for very careful management where we place the service facilities that will serve those who come to visit the regions and to really experience the very great ecological resources of the State of New Jersey.

Senator, the Pinelands Commission -- and I think you know from our past conversation -- we stand very ready to assist this Committee as you explore this rather important issue for the State of New Jersey. We think it has benefits to continue preservation of the region, but we also, as we have discussed, believe that it is a very important venture for the economic viability for some of the very small communities that exist within this very special part of New Jersey.

Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you very much, Terrence. We'll look forward to working with you on a possible bill to help promote ecotourism in the Pinelands.

Sally.

SALLY BRECHT PRICE: I'm Sally Price, and I'm Executive Director of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. I monitor the actions of the Pinelands Commission, and ditto to what Terry said. We don't always agree, but today I do agree with everything he said.

MR. MOORE: It's actually the first time. (laughter)

MS. PRICE: I definitely believe in promoting ecotourism. If I can get you out in a canoe, if I can take you on a hike in the Pinelands, I can make a supporter out of you; I can make you a protector.

When you wade through our famous aquifer and stand in the pygmy pines, smell the cedar swamps, you know, you'll believe in it and you'll protect it. I've done it with government officials and their families. I've done it with people from Russia, Australia, England, Costa Rica, and even Governor Whitman has canoed with us.

But I'd like to share with you, if I could: One day in August, a Sunday when I met with a group of our members at Nick's Canoe Livery, in Jenkins, which is south of Chatsworth, and we went canoeing. We met at 10:00 a.m. The parking lot was already filled with a group of other New Jersey residents, lots of them who happened to think it was a good idea to go canoeing in August, and most of the people were already drunk. They were loading 6-packs into their coolers, and into canoes they went.

Most of the day we spent traveling through Wharton State Forest, where alcohol is prohibited, but there wasn't anybody enforcing those regulations. The Park Service has been severely hit, and there just weren't any rangers.

The owner of Nick's Canoe Rental said to me that I was going to witness a different type of wildlife that day, and I did as the drunks frolicked, and we call it "bumper canoes" now. That's the sound of the aluminum canoes bouncing down these narrow streams.

I wanted to know, why was this allowed? Where were the people to enforce the regulations? And as I investigated I found out that in 1994 over 1 million people visited Burlington County's Wharton State Forest, and 77,000 visited Lebanon State Forest. Another 516,000 people visited the Pinelands parks of Belleplain and Bass River. In total, in 1994, over 1,642,000 people visited the Pinelands. I also found out, in comparison, in 1994, one-fourth of the people who visited the Pinelands visited Atlantic -- four times the number of people visited Atlantic City. Atlantic City is breaking all sorts of records for the number of tourists, and the Pinelands State parks saw one-fourth of those people, yet the Pinelands State parks were protected in 1994 by 53 people. It's been cut since 1994, and in 1997, it's being cut again.

A couple of my ideas: Organize a volunteer corps that would be organized, and the paid staff of the Park Forest Service would train to help police the parks. I also think that as we start to have discussions in developing ecotourism that we also need to identify policies that start addressing carrying capacities, which is not always a popular thing to do but I think it's going to keep it protected so that people continue to want to visit it.

Regarding limited financial resources, I think that if we can channel ecotourism into zones, create zones within the six regions that have been identified by the State Department of Travel and Tourism for the purpose of promoting and controlling manageability of the resources, that that would be a viable thing to do.

I also wanted to say that I am a member of the Stockton Alliance, and I would like to encourage you to attend the May 10 meeting that we are having. The Stockton Alliance offers itself as a resource to debate issues like this.

Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Sally, thank you very much.

Bill, thank you for joining us. We'll look forward to seeing you on May 10 and talk to you more about your initiative.

Is Debra Waxman here?

S U S A N R I C A R D I: I represent Debra Waxman.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Okay. Debra is with the New Jersey Travel Industry Association.

MS. RICARDI: My name is Susan Ricardi, and I represent--

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Papermill Playhouse, right?

MS. RICARDI: Right, Cape May Lighthouse. And I have with me today Diane Wieland, Director of County Tourism for Cape May County, and also Cindy O'Connor, the Executive Director of the Wetlands Institute. They will be joining me today with testimony.

Thank you very much. Thank you Senator.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: And you are here on behalf of the Travel Industry Association as well?

MS. RICARDI: That's correct. We have over 250 members of that industry, and within the realm of that particular industry, we also have various associations such as the Campgrounds Associations and the Amusement Associations, so that includes quite a broad range of the industry of tourism for our State.

I am Secretary of that organization. I am Co-Chair of the Cape May County Tourism Committee for the county chamber. I am the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts Marketing Director, and I am also Program Chair for the Governor's Conference on Tourism, which I invite you, Senator, and our great Assemblyman, Assemblyman Nick Asselta, who we have worked with on many projects. I think we are one of the only

regions in the State of New Jersey that has our Assemblyman present at our meetings and I wanted to personally thank you for that.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: He keeps telling me about Cape May County every time I see him.

MS. RICARDI: It's true. But on March 24 through March 26, and anyone in this room, I invite you to attend the Governor's Conference on Tourism. The Travel Industry Association has grouped with the Division to do that particular conference again this year, and as Program Chair, I have a particular keynote speaker who is coming who is internationally known in the field of ecotourism. His name is Burs Winterbottom. So I hope some of the folks from Parks and Forestry, and some of the people today, we begin networking with more often, like we're doing here in this meeting.

But I feel, if anything, what I've heard over the last couple of hours in this room needs to be communicated and communicated effectively to the people, not only in the State of New Jersey, but outside the State. I am sick and tired of Jay Leno and people getting down on the State of New Jersey and joking about what they see on the Turnpike and what they see on our roads in the State. We know what we have. We've heard about canoeing; we know about sport fishing. We have one of the biggest fishing tournaments in the world right in Cape May County this coming August.

We need to effectively communicate it, because unless we do a good job at that, my feeling is, all the work in this room just goes astray.

So that's my most important aspect that I'd like to communicate today. I'd also like to say that I feel that ecotourism is sort of like the internet of tourism today. If you don't have a break out session on ecotourism, you're not really in the tourism industry.

My organization, the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts, for many years has been involved in cultural tourism. In fact, my director, Michael Zuckerman, has done an

economic impact study that I believe the State has handy on cultural tourism and its significant impact.

I feel that this industry has the same potential, if not more, for that impact. Our clientele that comes to Cape May is the type of clientel that wants to do ecotouours, therefore, over the last five or six years, we've instituted a number of these tours. Some include the fishermens' warf tour, where you can sit on the lobster house dock and not only enjoy a lunch, but go through a wonderful guided tour of what that industry is all about. How a fish goes from the ocean to be fileted, to on your table, and is involved there. You can get the freshest fish right there in Cape May.

We are, I believe, the second largest seafood industry, taking it in. New Bedford, I don't believe is as high as we are, currently, and we need to communicate that, as well.

Another tour we do is harbor safari, which is great. That's done with the Nature Center of Cape May. Around Cape Island, we do a whale watching tour, which combines cultural and eco, which has been known as enlightened tourism.

In addition, we do a backbay wetlands cruise, which I know Cindy from the Wetlands Institute will be going into more.

Our County Chamber Committee has done a site-- You talked about inventory earlier? We've done it; it's here. I'd like to put that in as testimony, and my colleague will go over that further.

Again, in realizing that Cape May has many assets, ecotourism is in it. It's happening, and we want to do more. We want to help you out, Senator, in any way that we can.

I'd like to introduce, at this time, Cindy O'Connor, from the Wetlands Institue, and Diane Welland, my colleagues today.

Thank you very much.

CINDY O'CONNOR: Thank you. I am from the Wetlands Institute. We're a private, nonprofit organization. We have about 300 members. We do environmental education and research.

In answer to the questionnaire I was sent, yes, we promote ecotourism. New Jersey is the most populated State in the nation. Preservation of habitats is critical to the survival of the birds and animals that live here.

Inviting people to explore these areas and show them the critters is advantageous both to the tourist and to the wildlife. Visitors can only appreciate what they can understand. It's my feeling that the government doesn't have to reinvent the wheel in this area. There are numerous nonprofit organizations already conducting ecotours. The State could help by doing the press releases, hosting conferences and workshops.

In addition, a great deal of interpretive work -- and you've heard this mentioned before today -- needs to be done. You can't just take people into the woods, because if they don't know what they are looking at -- or the wetlands -- it doesn't mean anything to them.

I loved the testimony where they said, "You can't take a car full of people and say, 'Well, too bad, the bald eagle isn't here today.'" It needs signage; it needs videos; it needs some work to show people what they can do.

The Wetlands Institute trained, by a grant, 50 volunteers to be bay docents, to interpret what is happening along the Delaware Bay. We turn out 200 volunteers that work as docents and lead guides. We run bus trips through the Pinelands. We run back bay tours, kayaking trips, beach walks, nighttime beach walks -- let's go down and look at the ghost crabs. There is so much that can be done. There are so many wonderful nonprofit organizations such as Pinelands Preservation, Nature Conservancy, New Jersey Audobon, that are already out there doing it.

The Wetlands Institute does run an ecotourism event known as the Wings and Water Festival. We get top wildlife artists from across the nation. Last year we won the Governor's Award. We were also cited as one of the top 100 events in North America by the American Bus Association, and the Federal government Department of the Interior, only chooses three festivals in the nation to send their top duck stamp artists to. One in Chicago, one in eastern Maryland, one in Stone Harbor, New Jersey.

So we feel there are a lot of people out there already doing it, and we'd like to help in any way we can. Thank you.

DIANE WIELAND: My name is Diane Wieland, and I am the Acting Director of Cape May Department of Tourism and cochairman of the Cape May Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee, with a subcommittee on ecotourism.

In 1994, we saw that there was money to be made in ecotourism. We also realized the importance of protecting and preserving our natural resources. Cape May County has used the slogan for probably the last 40 years, "Where nature smiles for 30 miles," and we truly believe that that's the case.

Through our committee with the County Chamber of Commerce, and my position in the County Tourism Department, we've put together our inventory of natural sites. We worked together on this. We came up with 34 natural sites which educate people what the natural attractions that we have in Cape May County.

We worked with the Wetlands Institute. We tried to bring in as many experts as we have in Cape May County, and Cape May County is full of experts. We highlight some of the important aspects of ecotourism in Cape May County, in addition to listing and pinpointing on a map 34 different sites that promote ecotourism.

The Committee also, in addition to the inventory, saw the need for education. In June of 1995, we conducted an ecotourism conference. We had some top-notch speakers there. Again, we relied on our Cape May County and local experts to get the word out and educate our business community. We feel once the business

community is aware of what we have here and the importance of maintaining it, they can promote to their clientel what -- how to protect and preserve.

We also let them realize the importance of the bottom line, which is what all the businesspeople are mostly concerned with, that there is money to be made from ecotourism, as long as we can preserve and protect what we have.

Our plans for 1996 include taking our show on the road. There are many people who could not attend our conference, who could not be part of our committee, but it is also very important for us to reach those people. We're putting together a slide presentation, small talks that we can take out to the service organizations, the schools, and educate the people on not only what we have here, but the importance of protecting and preserving for the future.

I have written testimony, but in an effort to preserve our time, I'll just pass that in. Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Great. Thank you.

Assemblyman Asselta?

ASSEMBLYMAN ASSELTA: Yes. Before I leave -- I have to attend another meeting -- I just want to thank, once again, Senator Kyrillos and Senator Ciesla for allowing me to participate in this hearing.

A few observations: Really, the testimony has been fantastic, from every corner of the State, from Cape May to Warren County, to Cumberland County. I think we're all in unison in favoring developing a comprehensive marketing plan to expand our tourism market. I think that is what is really key here, we must have a comprehensive plan.

But what was particularly encouraging to me is two agencies that came forth today, the two State agencies: DEP and Mr. Hall, and the Pinelands Commission with Mr. Moore, and also offered their support in developing this plan. I think that is key to the development of ecotourism. It is key to the development of the tourism industry

in this State, and I think, out of this meeting, that may be the most significant part of this Committee meeting, the cooperation now that has been pledged by those two departments, and the Senate and myself, as Vice-Chairman of the Tourism and Gaming Committee. I think in unision, we can work together and continue to make this tourism economy grow.

I want to thank you, once again.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Assemblyman, thank you. We're going to look forward to working with you, and thanks for bringing so many of your constituents here. Now I know why you are so well-briefed and so enthused about this subject and other related subjects. Thank you very much.

Welcome.

ROBERT K. TUCKER, Ph.D.: Senator, thank you very much for convening this hearing. I'm Bob Tucker.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Bob Tucker, from the Ecopolicy Center at Rutgers.

DR. TUCKER: Right. As Terry Moore said, the academic community is very necessary. Jane Galetto talked about education. Many of the other folks that have testified already have pointed out how important education is as part of ecotourism.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Is Dr. Harold Millen here, from Georgian Court College? (no response) And we're going to hear from the President of the Audobon Society next after that.

Go ahead, Dr. Tucker. I apologize.

DR. TUCKER: I want to assure you that my colleagues and I at Rutgers very much appreciate your efforts and stand ready to help. We've already been part of this effort. Dr. Sojee Eduaja (phonetic) prepared a paper for the Skylands conference last June, in which he talked about enhancing the viability of New Jersey's farms through farm-based recreation and tourism.

I have prepared comments, but in the interest of time, I'll summarize very quickly.

I think humans are very much part of ecology. So, in fact, I would urge a broader definition of ecotourism. In fact, we ought to include agrotourism, and we need to think of urban areas in terms of ecotourism, the reclaiming of urban waterfronts, the redevelopment of urban areas certainly are educational opportunities for ecotourism.

I would argue for a process definition of ecotourism; that is, those tourism efforts that contribute to sustainability -- economic sustainability -- the future preservation of the environment in a way that balances the needs. I think, under that rubric, we can include urban efforts, we can include agricultural efforts of tourism and the natural environment.

I certainly applaud my former colleagues at DEP, Jim Hall and his folks in Natural Resources, for their stewardship of the environment. But I would also argue with others that maintaining the viability of New Jersey's environment is key for ecotourism.

In fact, I think we have an admirable record over the last 25 years of the kind of environmental protection that is held up as a model, but we need to continue that. I would like to call to your attention a couple of situations that I am aware of I think that endanger our ability to do environmental protection.

In DEP, the Division of Science and Research has come up with ideas for protecting the environment traditionally. In fact, right now they are involved with environmental indicators, which would measure ways to show environmental improvement. Senator Ciesla asked earlier about a resource guide. It was DSR that developed the GIS, which can be used to point out the place-based information that would go into that kind of a guide.

It is the scientists at DSR who have been involved in an ecological partnership that now involves Princeton, Rutgers, Trenton, Stockton, Ramapo; businesses like the David Sarnoff Center, watershed associations, ANJAC, in an ecological

partnership to gather data related to biodiversity and the ecology all over the State, to make it available not only to researchers, but also to package it in a way that the public can use it. This would be invaluable for the ecotourism efforts.

As I said, I need to call to your attention that 11 of 28 scientists in DSR are now targeted for layoffs. This would cripple some of the efforts for future environmental protection.

Also, the lineitem for the Marine Sciences Consortium has been taken out of next year's budget. That's money that matches three times the money that would come in from the Federal Sea Grant Program to do research along the shore and research on the fisheries.

So in terms of just resources, current resources for ecotourism, those are two instances that we need to maintain our present efforts in order to make sure that we have a viable environmental protection strategy for the future.

As I said earlier, Rutgers is very much interested in promoting education involvement. We think getting people actually involved -- beach camps, for example, would be a good way to get people involved in ecotourism.

My niece is a park ranger in Yosemite, and she got people involved in the actual restoration of the Merced River, right in the valley, by recruiting them at campfires the night before. And they loved it. They said that this was one of the best experiences that they have had. The actual involvement increased their ability to promote ecological restoration and that kind of thing. I think those are the opportunities that we can help try to implement.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Dr. Tucker, thank you for your thoughtful remarks. We appreciate you being here and all that you are doing.

DR. TUCKER: I have some economic studies-- (indiscernible, speaking off mike)

SENATOR KYRILLOS: We wanted to end up with some heavyweights from some of New Jersey's environmental organizations. Because the hour is so late, we're going to go to them next, and then go to some other folks right after that.

Richard Kane from the New Jersey Audubon Society is with us. Dery Bennet, from the American Littoral Society was here. He is coming. Bill FoFoelsch, from the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association. I don't see Tim Dillingham, from the Sierra Club.

Are you Mr. Bowler from the Sierra Club. (inaudible response, speaking from audience)

I see Cindy Zipf, from Clean Ocean Action; Larry Torok, from the Wildlife Society, we wanted to get you on with this heavyweigt panel. And then we have a few more people who have signed up, and I apologize that it is now 1:05, but it just -- it's just the way this hearing went today.

Mr. Kane, why don't you start off. Thank you for being patient.

RICHARD P. KANE: Thank you, Senator. I'm Richard Kane, Conservation Director of the New Jersey Audubon Society. I'd like to thank the Senator for the promotion to President. It's very nice.

New Jersey Audubon, with a membership of 15,000, a nonprofit organization has a mission in conservation education and wildlife research. For 100 years, we have been bringing people and nature together. I have not been doing it for 100 years, but the Society has. We do that primarily through our extensive natural history field programs. Our seven centers, combined, run about 175 field trips to all parts of the State, anywhere from High Point to Salem, from Cape May to Sandy Hook, to the Pinelands and all areas of the State for the purposes of observing and learning about wildlife.

In recent decades we've also run an extensive program to other states and to ten foreign countries. Some of our best known ecotourism events are our birding

weekends held in Stokes State Forest, in the Highlands, in Cumberland and Salem Counties, and especially our spring and fall Cape May weekends and the World Series of Birding held in Cape May in the second week of May.

The weekends in Cape May may attract 500 people or more to our package program and hundreds of others who register separately just for the programs.

So we're speaking both here as an advocate of conservation and as a practitioner of ecotourism, and also as a recipient of ecotourism, because we have 27 wildlife sanctuaries in the State of New Jersey that are visited by the public.

Our former Cape May Bird Observatory Director, Dr. Paul Kerlinger, did a lot of the studies that produced the hard information, nationwide and in New Jersey, on avitourism and other forms of ecotourism.

We describe ecotourism as travel; to natural areas for wildlife related purposes: birding, hiking, fishing, rock climbing, etc. We think the promotion of ecotourism and in particular, avitourism, is a wise use of natural resources because it calls attention to the outstanding natural features of our State that have been described here today. It provides an excellent additional motive for conservation of our natural resources, and also is a positive economic asset, not only for tourist businesses, but also for the ancillary businesses that serve both the promoters of tourism and the practitioners.

A multiplier effect occurs in the local economy, for instance, that surrounds a wildlife refuge, sometimes as high as three-to-one in the more rural areas. On average, the multiplier is about two-to-one in economies around ecotourist destinations. This means that for every dollar spent by the ecotourist, two dollars are spent by the locals in the local economy.

The promotion of ecotourism is cost effective in most places, so why not here? The Province of New Brunswick, Canada, has done an excellent job of promoting birds and bird habitats to their ecotourists. I am one. I've used their materials; they're good, and I would recommend an exchange program with the Province of New

Brunswick, Canada. For example, they have a major shorebird staging area in the Bay of Fundy in July. We have a similar phenomenon here on the Delaware Bay shore every year in May. I would urge everybody to go see that.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Mr. Kane, let me interrupt you. I'm sorry. You have three, single spaced pages. We can't hear it all. We're going to submit all of this for the written testimony, but if you could highlight some of the--

MR. KANE: Okay, let me pass on to some of the other topics quickly.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Sure, I apologize.

MR. KANE: On the issue of balancing tourism needs with preserving the environment, New Jersey Audubon in general and I in particular do a lot of tourism during the year and a lot of conservation work, and while there is some anecdotal information about negative impacts from ecotourism, harrassment of whales, things like that, by and large, the plus factors outweigh the minus. Whale watching is a good example. We have a growing whale watching industry here in New Jersey now, in all four seasons. One of the things that happens as a result of this is that it increases the number of environmental advocates.

Whale watchers help us to help along petition drives to set aside the Stellwagen Banks as a marine sanctuary in Massachusettes, and the same type of people here are the ones who do the check-off and buy the wildlife license plates and who have become the advocates for the environment and ecotourism. So we don't see ecotourism as a threat. We see it as an opportunity. It can drive resource compatible economy.

The issue is not, how do you protect the natural environments from ecotouists. The issue is, how do you protect the natural environment without resource compatible economies. It seems to me that's the key issue.

I'll skip the Highlands. A great deal has been mentioned about that. The State Plan is a help, I believe, in protection and in ecotourism, if it is actively supported by the government and implemented. If permits and approvals in the various program

follows the Plan's guidelines, the environment can be safeguarded with help from regional planning and cooperation between towns, which is another important issue.

Here are some quick facts on avitourism in New Jersey I think are interesting. The average birder spends \$350 a year on travel. Committed birders spend about \$2000 a year, half of that on travel. In Cape May, 100,000 birders visit the peninsular every year, half from out of State. They contribute \$10 million to Cape May's economy. Forsythe, in Atlantic County, gets 250,000 visitors; 175,000 of them go around the dikes. About 140,000 of those are birders.

In Cape May, in 1988, birders stayed in 63 hotels, 30 bed and breakfasts, and they used 116 restaurants. The average stay was four days, and they returned on an average of two additional seasons each year.

The key thing is that avitourism takes place in the off season; that is, after Labor Day and before Memorial Day. That is a very important point.

I have some statistics on our weekends on the Cape May peninsula, our various birding weekends. The fall weekend, the hotel tab is \$55,000. People are coming there because New Jersey is a bird rich State. The World Series raises \$500,000 for conservation every year, and through pledges, involves 70,000 people, many from out of State.

Cape May is a magnet that draws the World Series participants and birders from all over the world.

Thank you very much for listening. I have one or two sample brochures from Canada that I would like to leave with the Committee to take a look at.

One quick last point: New Jersey has a natural areas program, which protects the most sensitive sites. These have layers of protection that a lot of our other sites in the State don't get, so I think the concern about damage to environmental sites from ecotourism is overrated.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Very good. Thank you for your thoughtful remarks.

Dery Bennett, where is the best place to whale watch?

D E R Y B E N N E T T: I had put a few things on the list that maybe people hadn't mentioned. Whale watching was one of them. The ferry boat that runs commuters on the weekend, from Highlands up to New York, runs whale watches on the weekends, when the boats aren't busy. And they run whale watches out of every port, Cape May for Shore, Barnegat Light. Some of the fishing has dropped off and some whale watching has picked it up. This is a year round activity.

Another activity that has not been mentioned as ecotourism in New Jersey is scuba diving and snorkeling. New Jersey has a lot of shipwecks and a lot of groins and jetties, and these are good places for-- There is a lot of diving going on in the State, more than you realize. There are people from both in-State and out of State.

There is ecotourism going on in urban areas, and I want to mention a couple of those, because I think the urban areas are sometime left out. There is a small startup of nature tourism on the Hackensack River. It's billed as "Visit the Giants Stadium by water and see 50 species of birds." Indeed, there is a lot of wildlife in the Hackensack Meadowlands, and there are people who are running tour boats now to introduce people to those kinds of wildlife.

The Delaware River eagles have been mentioned, the red knots at Cape May. The Littoral Society runs a trip a month all year long, within the State, to do things. Among other visitation places we go to the commercial fishing docks and spend a half a day learning about how the commercial fishing is done.

We have a New Year's Day beach walk where we walk to the Hook, the world's stupidist walk. Two hundred and fifty people take part in that. They get cold and hungry and don't get any reward, and they love it. We don't even have to announce

it anymore. On New Year's Day, at 11:00, there are 200 or 300 people ready to walk to the tip of the Hook.

People will do a lot to get out of doors, and all they need -- and sometimes they need to do it in a group, because they won't do it alone. It's too cold; it's too much trouble. But if you get them out, they do it.

Bea Berzon is here, from the urban area, and would talk about some of these things better than I could. But I did want to suggest that ecotourism in the urban areas is possible.

To give you another example, we run a trip regularly to the Jersey City waterfront to look for snowy owls. These are big white owls that come down from the arctic and eat rats and pheasants that live around the Liberty State Park. You can almost count on them being down in the winter.

Some of the very best winter birding is in the New York/New Jersey harbor area. So the possibilities, I think, are unlimited.

I want to make a couple of suggestions. One is that -- and this is something we've been interested in getting people to think about the State Plan, about watersheds. I don't think this State does as good a job as some other states do on signage. I would give you one suggestion, and that is, I think that every time a road crosses a stream or river, there should be a sign that says what that river is. "This is the Hackensack River." "This is the Delaware River." We, after all, know that this is the Vince Lombardi reststop, (laughter) maybe it's more important to know that this is the Rahway River.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: We've got to get our priorities in order.

MR. BENNETT: Yes.

A number of times we have supported the introduction of legislation that forces or encourages the Department of Transportation, every time they build or rebuild a bridge over water, to consider that as a fishing access, either to put design into the

bridge platforms that could be hung below the bridge, so people can fish. They do this in Florida and in many other states.

We're not suggesting that every bridge in New Jersey that goes across water is fishable, but a lot of them are. There is no reason that a bridge can't be thought of as something more than just a place to get cars across water. There should be maybe a second or third use.

The other thing I would encourage, a lot of people love to walk beaches off season, or in the evenings at off season. There is, as you know, a lot of money going into beach replenishment in New Jersey. The beach access is not all that it should be on those beaches that we are putting in, so to the extent that we can get people onto those beaches to use them off season, it's low impact, which is my definition of ecotourism, low impact, generally nonconsumption use of natural resources.

Lastly, I would say that any way that, through your Committee, there could be some way to make sure that the Fish and Wildlife, and the outdoor parks' people are funded to be able to handle what we are talking about encouraging, the better. There has got to be a way to fund it somehow. It's terribly important. Thanks.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Dery, thanks for being with us today. We appreciate it.

Cindy Zipf, from Clean Ocean Action.

CINDY ZIPF: Hi. Good afternoon, Senator. Thank you for holding this hearing, and for recognizing ecotourism as the other side of New Jersey's economy that really gets short shrift oftentimes. I think that it shows a lot of vision, and hopefully that this Committee can really focus attention on the other side of New Jersey's economy, because according to the national organization, Coast Alliance, which recently did a nationwide study of coastal economies, 51 percent of the State's budget comes from coastal oriented activities. So it is a very significant chunk of our economy, and it really-- The activities

that produce that money really don't get the attention that they are deserving until now, thanks to you.

I did submit some written testimony, and the survey, as I know you have discussed, and I'm not going to go over too many of those points. I think that I just wanted to emphasize some things that Dery said, on the economy and the importance of dedicating funds to ensure the protection of these areas.

One of the reasons we have such great snorkeling, such great diving opportunities, such a new phenomenon called whale watching in New Jersey is because we worked so hard after the summer of _____ ve the water conditions. So I think that that cannot be lost. There is actions, as you know, throughout the Legislature, both at the State level and at the national level, to weaken a lot of those laws because of the economic hardships on some certain industries. But it is the protection of those environments that have lead to an increase in the economy along the shore and up in the urban areas. To the extent that we clean up these urban areas, we can reclaim more and more of those recreational opportunities. It doesn't make any sense for children that live in urban areas not to understand the incredible migratory paths of birds, the incredible lifecycles of fish and other life in those areas, and we really have to emphasize education. And New Jersey needs to promote its environmental uniqueness. I think it's a national uniqueness. I don't think that there is anyplace in the country where you have such diversity as you do here in New Jersey.

I have written some other suggestions about some creative ways that we can think about raising some funds that you have, but again, I think it's important to emphasize that because so much of New Jersey's tax revenues come from the shore and from other tourism industries throughout the State, that we need to dedicate some of those moneys to protection of these areas, and to that end, we encourage you to get involved in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection budget cuts, the budget cuts

to the Marine Police, and also budget cuts to Sea Grant through the Marine Sciences Consortium.

I have a couple of other suggestions that I thought of, and that is, I have copies of a Sea Grant booklet that was done in the south, called, "Nature-based tourism: a Walk on the Wild Side," which I have for Committee members. In addition to that, I have a copy of the Coastal Zone Management Act. And a very, I think, helpful thing to do, would be for the Senate to memorialize Congress to move the Coastal Zone Management Act forward. It's got a great deal of support. There is something like over 130 co-sponsors to that piece of legislation in Washington, which is unprecedented for an environmental standpoint bill, so it shows broad support. It's sponsored by Mr. Saxton, of New Jersey, and we really need to move that bill out of committee and reauthorize the Coastal Zone Management Act. So I have some information on that for you.

Finally, I think it is very important, and it would be hardly-- It would be a rare occurrence if I didn't talk about the ocean dumping activities and the mud dump site, in particular. I think it is very important that we not allow the continued degradation of our ocean, nor the expansion of those areas off the Jersey Shore, and we will look for your help to make sure that we do provide for adequate depth and adequate commerce, but not at the expense of the ocean resources.

Finally, you know you were perhaps one of our first elected officials that participated in a beach sweep, which you know are activities where thousands and thousands of people now hit the Jersey shore in the spring and in the fall to collect debris that has been accumulating on the beaches. It is our goal and our vision that that part of Clean Ocean Action will become a part of history. That we will go to the beach and talk about the days when we used to have to pick up the trash, but that's only if the Senate is committed and effective at solving and not contributing to any further degradation of our waters, so don't allow any weakening of any environmental laws.

Thank you.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: We thank you very much. Thanks for your comments and your suggestion on the resolution. I want to particularly thank you for putting together a very thorough response to our survey, as did the Audubon Society, and the Regional Plan Association who were up here before, and many many people did. But I think there was some extra work that went into it, and I'm very grateful to you.

You're quite right, there were kinds of things we did in 1988 and 1989 in response to the crisis off our shores is why we can talk about some of these activities today, whale watching and the like, which I've never done.

Thank you.

Form the Sierra Club?

LESLIE BOWLER: Yes. My name is Leslie Bowler, and I'm here from the Sierra Club. I happen to be a lifelong resident of New Jersey, and I have found that this meeting has been absolutely marvelous. I feel very encouraged about saving the open space and working with the Sierra Club in that respect, as well.

You know, probably, that the Sierra Club is a nationwide organization, and the New Jersey Chapter has about 20,000 members in it. One of the things we've done to try and promote this whole idea that we're talking about, ecotourism, and saving open space in New Jersey, is develop a slide show, which I have presented to many organizations throughout the State, which basically is designed to talk about preserving the open space, providing -- supporting the State Plan, and giving many more opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors and nature in New Jersey.

We run about 400 outings with volunteer leaders of all kinds, bringing people out into nature all over New Jersey, and it's something like the ecotourism that we are talking about today. We serve to introduce people to the natural treasures of New Jersey.

The club and the New Jersey Chapter strongly supports the ecotourism idea as a benefit to all New Jersey citizens, and ecotourism supports the goals that the Sierra Club has had for 100 years.

SENATOR KYRILLOS: Thank you. Thank you for being here and all the work you are doing.

We need to have you switch chairs so you can get to a microphone. Larry Torok, from the Wildlife Society, and Bill F