

Freeholders Approve Preservation of Additional 101 Farmland Acres

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders, at Tuesday's meeting, granted final approval for the preservation of 101 acres of farmland in Tewksbury and Franklin Townships, bringing the County's total farmland preservation to 31,957 acres.

Freeholder Board Director Matt Holt said, "This Freeholder Board continues to be committed to the preservation of farmland as a policy priority. Preserving the agricultural nature of the county and agricultural business in the County is a key component of Hunterdon County's economic development strategy."

The Board approved the development easement for the 39 acre Miller Farm in Tewksbury Township, with the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) providing 60% of the total purchase cost of \$526,500.

The Board also approved the development easement for the 62 acre Hope Hill Farm in Franklin Township, at no cost to the County or the Township. The SADC provided \$351,000 of the purchase cost, and the Federal Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) provided \$335,000 of the purchase cost.

The purchase of development easements allows farmland to continue in agricultural production under private ownership. Open space tax funds are used for the County and municipal share of preservation purchase costs. The development rights are held by either the County or the State, (depending on the grant program) which ensures that the property remains in agricultural land use, eliminating future opportunities for development.

Freeholder Holt stated, "We are particularly pleased to note that the Hope Hill Farm's preservation is funded with federal and state resources, keeping Franklin's and the County's funds home for use for other preservation projects."