

**LAFAYETTE TOWNSHIP  
SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**RESOLUTION 2024-24**

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION AR133 AND SENATE  
RESOLUTION SR93 OPPOSING ALL PROPOSALS TO CHANGE THE DESIGNATION OF  
THE DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA TO NATIONAL PARK  
AND PRESERVE, INCLUDING PROPOSAL BY THE DELAWARE RIVER NATIONAL  
PARK AND LENAPE PRESERVE ALLIANCE**

**WHEREAS**, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA) was established September 1, 1965, one of 10 National Recreation Areas of the National Park Service, currently encompassing nearly 70,000 acres in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and is a protected area in the United States established by an Act of Congress to preserve enhanced recreational opportunities in places with significant natural and scenic resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the DEWA offers recreational opportunities such as hiking, walking, bicycling, fishing, hunting, swimming, camping, canoeing, boating, cross country skiing, bird watching, horseback riding, sightseeing, and special events; cultural resources, infrastructural facilities, national resources, and rare, threatened and endangered species of plants, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibians; and

**WHEREAS**, Lafayette Township residents enjoy the recreational opportunities as well as cultural and natural resources of this open space and local businesses benefit from the tourism brought by Stokes State Forest, State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife and DEWA bring to the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee of the Township of Lafayette is aware of the initial proposal in 2022 and a revised proposal in 2023 by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance seeking to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no insight or plan for the change in designation; namely the environmental, economic and agricultural impact to the DEWA and to the residents and local businesses of Lafayette Township and Sussex County; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no information on how the rights of public land and private property owners will be safeguarded and protected against eminent domain to acquire and public lands, namely, Stokes State Forest, High Point State Park and State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife lands as well as acquisition of private property; and

**WHEREAS**, conversion of private property to federal parkland would reduce tax revenue realized by Lafayette Township and surrounding municipalities, negatively impact enrollment of local school districts, and negatively impact our local economy by reducing access to recreational activities enjoyed by residents and visitors to Lafayette Township and Sussex County; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no information on the plan to facilitate this change; the implementation of fee collection and location of collection stations; and how funding will be provided for this proposed National Park; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no information on the plan to compensate local volunteer first responders (Fire and EMS) on the inevitable increase in emergency calls and response, wear and tear on vehicles and equipment and devastation to these organizations both financially and in membership and will adversely impact and affect the safety, health and welfare of the residents of Lafayette Township and Sussex County

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no insight or plan on funding and maintenance of infrastructure and vegetation management; changes agricultural leasing which will economically impact farmers who depend on crops to hold livestock over the winter months and farming for cash crops; causes agricultural fields to fallow and which will encourage invasive species such as Russian Olive to thrive allows Forest to Field Conversion which will

leave approximately 58,000 acres in the proposed preserve open to timber degradation, land clearing, soil erosion resource extraction, mineral, gas and oil exploration, and wildfires.

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee of the Township of Lafayette firmly opposes the proposal of the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance, or any other organization, seeking to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to a National Park and Preserve as this proposal offers no benefit to the residents of Lafayette Township and Sussex County.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Township Committee of the Township of Lafayette does hereby support New Jersey Assembly Resolution AR133 and New Jersey Senate Resolution SR93 opposing all proposals to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Township Committee of the Township of Lafayette requests copies of this resolution be sent to President Joe Biden; Governor Phil Murphy; New Jersey State Senator F. Parker Space; New Jersey State Senator Douglas Steinhardt; New Jersey Assemblyman Michael Inganamort; New Jersey Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia; New Jersey Assemblyman John DiMaio; NJ and PA State Assembly and State Senate members; Sussex County Board of County Commissioners; all municipalities of Sussex County; National Park Service, Charles Sams, Director; National Park Service Northeast Region, Gay Vietzke, Regional Director; Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Doyle Sapp, Superintendent; Delaware River Basin Commission; Partnership for the Delaware Estuary; National Lands Trust; Warren County Board of County Commissioners; High Point Regional High School Board of Education and Scott Ripley, Superintendent; Lafayette Township School Board of Education and Michael Gall, Superintendent; New Jersey League of Municipalities; Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance; New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club.

#### **CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and certified copy of the resolution adopted by the Lafayette Township Committee, Sussex County, New Jersey at the regularly scheduled meeting held on Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at the Lafayette Township Municipal Building, 33 Morris Farm Road, Lafayette, NJ 07848.

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AnnaRose Fedish, RMC  
Municipal Clerk