

Hillsborough To Join Statewide Lawsuit Opposing Affordable Housing Rules

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Citing a questionable methodology used by the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) in determining affordable housing requirements, Hillsborough Township will join with the State League of Municipalities in a legal challenge to the Third Round Affordable Housing rules that were approved by the COAH last week.

The Township Committee authorized a pledge of \$500 for use in the potential legal challenge that was requested by the State League of Municipalities, in order to gauge the interest and commitment of municipalities throughout the state.

Mayor Anthony Ferrera stated, "There are questions not only about fairness in setting up each community's requirements of affordable housing, but questions have also been raised regarding COAH's methodology in determining those requirements. We should take advantage of joining the League's legal challenge. \$500 is far cheaper than paying our own attorneys to bring suit."

Committeeman Carl Suraci reported he had attended a COAH meeting on April 29th, sponsored by Senator Kip Bateman and Assemblyman Peter Biondi, where Community Affairs Commissioner Joseph Doria briefed Somerset County officials.

"The fact that COAH used land that is preserved or has environmental restrictions in its determination of how much housing will be built over the next ten years was completely brushed aside by the Commissioner. Litigation by the towns seems to be the only course of action left in order to protect our communities," Committeeman Suraci stated.

Hillsborough passed a resolution on March 11th opposing the new rules, citing several concerns, including the fact that the proposed rules offer no credit for Hillsborough's land preservation efforts, unfairly penalize the Township because of its large size, and do not recognize development restrictions instituted by the Township on environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Sourland Mountains