

**Subject:** Recommended Tax Levy for  
the County Open Space Trust  
Fund, for Fiscal Year 2020

WHEREAS, the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board was created to oversee the Open Space Acquisition Program; and,

WHEREAS, a referendum was overwhelmingly approved by the voters of Mercer County in November 1989, whereby the Board of Chosen Freeholders could appropriate annually a sum not to exceed \$0.01 per \$100.00 of equalized assessed value for the acquisition of open spaces and establishment of Open Space Preservation Trust Fund; and,

WHEREAS, a referendum was overwhelmingly approved by the voters of Mercer County in November 1998, increasing the tax, whereby the Board of Chosen Freeholders could appropriate annually a sum not to exceed \$0.02 per \$100.00 of equalized assessed value for the acquisition of open space, preservation of farmland, and recreational development, and establishment of the County Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund; and,

WHEREAS, a referendum was approved by the voters of Mercer County in November 2004, increasing the tax, whereby the Board of Chosen Freeholders could appropriate annually a sum not to exceed \$0.03 per \$100.00 of equalized assessed value for the acquisition of open space, preservation of farmland, recreational development, and historic preservation; and,

WHEREAS, a referendum was approved by the voters of Mercer County in November 2012, changing the allocation of the use of the County Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund to allow at least 70% of the amount of the raised by the existing tax levy for preservation of parks, farmland and other space; and to allow up to 20% of the amount raised by the existing levy for recreational development and/or historic preservation and to allow up to 10% of the amount raised by the existing levy for stewardship of the land; and,

WHEREAS, the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board has been organized and active since November 1990, and along with the Mercer County Planning Board adopted the Open Space and Recreation Plan in October 1992; and,

WHEREAS, the plan has numerous projects prioritized for acquisition which are actively being pursued; now, therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board recommends to the County Executive that based on actual projects on hand, debt services, and the need for Mercer County open space acquisition over time, that two and a half pennies (\$0.025) per hundred (\$100.00) of equalized assessed value be levied and collected for the "County Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust" for 2020.

**DATE ADOPTED:** March 3, 2020

**SECRETARY:** Emily Blackman