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CHARGE RIVER PRESERVATION PLAN IS FATALLY FLAWED Environmental & Civic Groups Fear Development in Carmans Watershed

For Release: August 17. Contact: Richard Amper (631)369-3300

Dozens of environmental and civic leaders have written to Brookhaven Supervisor Mark Lesko challenging the legitimacy of his proposed plan to preserve the Carmans River in the Town of Brookhaven. Their June 30 letter contained ten concerns but has received no response. Today, they held a news conference and rally on the steps of Town Hall to publicize their concern that mega-development is planned for the sensitive river watershed and the preservation plan as designed is a sham.

They said the Lesko plan has inadequate stakeholder participation, no scientifically defensible watershed and contemplates approval of more than 40 new development projects, including high density, mega-development in the Carmans watershed, before a preservation plan can be implemented.

“Even as he promotes river preservation, Supervisor Lesko is advancing so much development that the Carmans will be destroyed before a protection plan can be produced,” said Richard Amper, Executive Director of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society.

Others agreed. Marilyn England, President of the Open Space Council said, “The town has a decision to make – it can continue to preside over the death of the river, or make a meaningful commitment to restoring and protecting this much-loved community resource. There is no middle ground.”

Environmentalists focused on the need for watershed protection. Karen Blumer of the Open Space Preservation Trust, called for a science-based watershed delineation. She said, “Not only is the preservation plan flawed, but so is the 50-year groundwater delineation it is based upon. It excludes known contributing waters well north of Route 25 in Middle Island, thus reducing a significant watershed to an ecologically-meaningless corridor.”

Peconic Baykeeper Kevin McAllister said, "The State of New York recently classified the South Shore bays of Suffolk County as "Impaired Waters" because of nitrogen pollution from the thousands of cesspools leaching wastewater into our ponds, streams and bays. Brookhaven's failure to even remotely address this issue in its plan is ample reason to question the legitimacy of this process and the Town's commitment to clean water".

Doug Swesty President of the Art Flick Chapter of Trout Unlimited bluntly put it, “The boundaries of the Carmans River watershed are defined by nature, not by legislation. You can’t gerrymander a watershed.”

Community leaders called on the Town Board to accept their recommendations, adopt a temporary moratorium on development in the watershed until a protection plan is in place and involve concerned citizens in and out of government in the preservation process. "This is our last chance to save the Carmans River. The last thing we need is more development and pollution," Amper said.