



# NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 17, 2010  
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## **SADC to Hold Public Hearing on Washington Twp. MUA Proposal to Condemn Portions of 2 Farms for Community Wells**

WASHINGTON TWP. – The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) will hold a public hearing at 7 p.m. on Monday, August 23, on a proposed plan by the Washington Township Municipal Utility Authority (MUA) to condemn portions of two farms to install community water supply wells. The hearing will be held at the Washington Township Municipal Building at 43 Schooley’s Mountain Road.

The farms – the Smith Farm on Drakestown Road and the Searles Farm on Flocktown Road – are located in an Agricultural Development Area (ADA) established by the Morris County Agriculture Development Board (CADB). An ADA is an area where agriculture is the preferred use of the land. The condemnation would result in the MUA’s acquisition of just under an acre on each of the two farms.

Under New Jersey’s Agriculture Retention and Development Act, any public body or public utility that intends to condemn land in an ADA must notify the SADC and CADB prior to filing a condemnation action. The SADC and CADB are required to review the proposed action to determine its effect on the preservation and enhancement of agriculture in the ADA, and on overall State agricultural preservation and development policies.

Both the SADC and CADB found that the proposed condemnation would cause unreasonably adverse impacts on the preservation and enhancement of agriculture in the ADA, and on the State’s agricultural preservation and development policies. Concerns include likely impacts on existing and future agricultural activities on the Smith and Searles farms, the potential impact on water availability for other nearby farms, and a lack of a demonstrated analysis of alternatives that would not impact the ADA.

The SADC made its finding at its July 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. In accordance with the statute, the SADC directed that the Washington Township MUA take no further action for 60 days,

during which time the SADC will hold a public hearing and issue a report with its recommendations. The report is advisory in nature and is intended to inform the condemnation process.

Written public comments may be addressed to the SADC through Sept. 10, 2010, at [sadc@ag.state.nj.us](mailto:sadc@ag.state.nj.us) or P.O. Box 330, Trenton 08625-0330.

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