

RESOLUTION NUMBER 125-22

A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING TO LOCAL RESIDENTS AND GOVERNMENT ENTITIES THAT THE MUNICIPALITY EXPRESSES ITS OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSAL OF ANY PAID DRIVING PERMITS IN WHARTON STATE FOREST

WHEREAS, Wharton State Forest is the largest state forest in New Jersey at approximately 123,000 square feet; and

WHEREAS, residents of the Pine Barren municipalities, and throughout the state, have enjoyed unfettered access to the elaborate system of roads since the land officially became Wharton State Forest in 1954 and even well before its official designation; and

WHEREAS, regardless if visitors are driving to get to a hike, a hunting or fishing expedition or just going for a drive through the forest, they've been able to do so without paying for expensive permit fees on their vehicles; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has been holding virtual stakeholder meetings to garner interest in installing a vehicle permit and roadmap system of where permitted vehicles are allowed to drive in the park; and

WHEREAS, a vehicle permitting system could be closely matched to the Department of Environmental Protection's \$195 per-vehicle permit in Island Beach State Park; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection already enjoyed an over \$250 million budget in 2021, and residents of New Jersey already pay the highest property taxes in the nation; and now be it

RESOLVED, that the **BOROUGH OF MEDFORD LAKES** believes that through property taxes and the Department of Environmental Protection budget, there is more than enough money for the State of New Jersey to address maintenance and conservation in Wharton State Forest

RESOLVED, that the **BOROUGH OF MEDFORD LAKES** understands and sympathizes with the heavy tax burden already placed on New Jersey residents and the myriad of other fees and taxes they already pay, therefore, expressly opposes any plan to create a costly vehicle permit to drive on Wharton State Forest roads

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Governor Phil Murphy, Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver, New Jersey Senate President Nicholas Scutari, New Jersey Senate Republican Leader Steven Oroho., New Jersey Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, New Jersey Assembly Republican Leader John DiMaio, and our State Senator and Assembly members.

Mayor Miller noted that the proposed changes would impede access to all residents and called for the vote.

VOTE

	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Absent	Abstain
Mayor Dr. Gary A. Miller			X			
Deputy Mayor William R. Fields					X	
Councilwoman Dr. Gail A. Caputo		X	X			
Councilman Thomas J. Cranston					X	
Councilman Dennis P. O'Neill	X		X			