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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Organized Citizen's Group Files Lawsuit to Stop Overdevelopment of Patrick Farm

“ROSA Names Town of Ramapo and Three Others in Article 78 Proceeding”

RAMAPO, NY, February 15, 2011: ROSA (Ramapo Organized for Sustainability and a Safe Aquifer) is the driving force behind a lawsuit filed on February 7th, 2011 in the Supreme Court of the State of New York (Rockland County). The lawsuit is an Article 78 proceeding against four (4) defendants, who include the Town of Ramapo, the Planning Board of the Town of Ramapo, the Town of Clarkstown, and Scenic Development, LLC (a Monsey-based developer). ROSA has provided the financial support for the lawsuit's fifteen (15) litigants, all with the required standing and all supporters of ROSA's mission. The Albany-based law firm of Tabner, Ryan, and Keniry, LLP represents all litigants.

This legal action arises from the January 6th, 2011 decision of the Planning Board of the Town of Ramapo granting the application for preliminary subdivision approval for a project entitled Patrick Farm Subdivision. The proposed Subdivision would significantly alter forever the character of the community and transform Patrick Farm, which is currently mostly undeveloped, environmentally sensitive land into a gigantic, sprawling, and super-densely-packed subdivision with nearly five hundred homes, over four hundred of which would be enormous, dormitory style multi-family buildings.

The suit alleges seven (7) distinct areas of violation. They are as follows:

1. Failure to comply with SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review Act)
2. Failure to consider impact on the Aquifer and Water Quality (The Farm has wetlands and water on the property and part of the development will sit atop a large, regional sole source aquifer)
3. Deficient Wetlands Certifications
4. Inadequate Tree Mapping and Survey
5. Vague and Indefinite Conditions (specifically regarding the Columbia Natural Gas Line which will run under the development)
6. Failure to Consider the Impact Upon the Viewshed
7. Failure to Comply with Subdivision Laws and Regulations

The entire Article 78 proceeding can be found on ROSA's website, www.rosa4rockland.org.

This is only one of four Article 78 filings against the Town of Ramapo in the matter of land use at Patrick Farm. ROSA's lawsuit now, along with three others, is filed against the Town as a result of the January 6th, 2011 Planning Board decision; two others were filed by private citizens and the Village of Pomona (NY) filed another. In the recent past, these three (3) other parties filed lawsuits based on other similar issues against the Town of Ramapo.

ROSA has successfully organized the plaintiffs, along with hundreds of other concerned citizens, to raise awareness about the many dangers of overdeveloping the Patrick Farm, in particular, the threat to the area's sole source aquifer. In just over three (3) short months, the group has galvanized neighbors in Ramapo and surrounding communities into a functioning organization that has raised the money to hire professionals with expertise to advocate on its behalf.

Suzanne Mitchell, ROSA's director, says. "ROSA's leadership and volunteer supporters are enlisting committed volunteer workers with special skills. We are also gathering momentum. We are raising money and using our resources to enlist experts like attorney William J. Keniry, and certified Planner, Alan Sorensen to ensure that everyone knows how ill conceived the proposed Patrick Farm project really is. We are forming an alliance within Ramapo and reaching out to neighboring communities. We must rely on one another through this ongoing proceeding through financial donations, advocacy and volunteerism."

The effected aquifer service area includes a large area in Rockland County and parts of Bergen (NJ) and Orange (NY) counties, regardless of whether residents use private well or public utility water.

Adds Ms. Mitchell, "ROSA is united with one voice and our message is clear. We will fight to keep this disproportionate and inappropriate development from changing our community's character and draining our natural resources. Patrick Farm is an environmentally sensitive area and we will not allow our Town government to make mistakes that will cause irreparable harm and a permanent transformation of our community. We will not accept the increased traffic congestion, higher taxes, lower home values and damage to our water supply that this project will assuredly bring without having voice in how this land is developed."

ROSA continues to welcome new members and donations. According to Mitchell, "People realize we are all in this together. Our need for clean water is universal. The right to have our natural resources protected, and advocating to drive on safe, uncongested roads are worthy causes." The water quantity and quality of well over 100,000 homes would be negatively impacted by the overdevelopment of Patrick Farm. If we each contribute as little as \$250 or as much as \$25,000 we will be successful in telling the Town of Ramapo, as our lawsuit points out, that it must evaluate and permit land use and development in a more comprehensive and sustainable way."

WHO: ROSA (Ramapo Organized for Sustainability and a Safe Aquifer)

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ROSA: Informed and engaged citizens, who are professionally organized and legally represented, working to ensure that development is proportional and appropriate for the land on which it is built.

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