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NH Dept. of Trans.

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Staff:

Tracie Sales
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Program Assistant

N.H. Lakes Management and Protection Program
N.H. Lakes Management Advisory Committee

February 6, 2019

The Honorable Suzanne Smith, Chair
House Resources, Recreation, and Development
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 542 *Establishing a grant program to support municipalities in updating their wetlands regulations.*

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Lakes Management Advisory Committee (LMAC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill 542, which establishes a grant program to support municipalities in updating their wetlands regulations. The LMAC supports this bill.

This fund will be administered by the Office of Strategic Initiatives in cooperation with the regional planning commissions and will be used to assist municipalities in updating or adopting wetlands regulations. The LMAC supports this bill because some municipalities have no local wetlands regulations while other municipalities have local wetlands regulations that need updating. This grant program would allow the Office of Strategic Initiatives to work with municipalities that have identified critical deficiencies in their wetlands protection ordinances, resulting in a heightened risk of wetland degradation. Wetlands serve a fundamental role in providing clean water as well as essential, unique fish and wildlife habitat that benefits all of New Hampshire's surface waters, including its lakes.

The LMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to administer RSA 483-A, the Lakes Management and Protection Program. The Governor and Council appointed Committee is comprised of 19 members representing academia, business, conservation organizations, lake associations, tourism, fish and game commission, marine trades, realtors, municipal government as well as several state agencies. Among its other responsibilities, the LMAC reviews legislation relevant to the Program and the state's lakes and ponds, and advises the NHDES Commissioner on the merits of such legislation.

In conclusion, the LMAC supports HB 543 because it would provide funds to allow the Office of Strategic Initiatives to assist municipalities in adopting or updating local wetland regulations.

The Honorable Suzanne Smith
Chair, Resources, Recreation, and Development Committee
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Should you have further questions about this testimony, please feel free to contact me at (603) 867-9299 or appliedforce52@gmail.com.

Sincerely,



David Packard
Chair

cc: Rep. Chuck Grasse
Rep. Ivy Vann
LMAC Representatives
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES
Rene Pelletier, Assistant Director, Water Division, NHDES
Ted Diers, Administrator, Watershed Mgmt. Bur., NHDES
Tracie Sales, Rivers and Lakes Programs Manager, NHDES