

# LAKES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## NH Lakes Management and Protection Program

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services  
29 Hazen Drive, P.O. Box 95, Concord, NH 03302-0095

April 21, 2011

The Honorable Charles (Chuck) Morse, Chairman  
Senate Finance Committee  
Room 305, State House  
107 North Main Street  
Concord, NH 03301

### RE: HB 1-A

Dear Chairman Morse and members of the Committee:

The Lakes Management Advisory Committee (LMAC) is very concerned that the budget passed by the NH House of Representatives eliminates four programs that leverage extensive volunteer resources and produce more income for the state of New Hampshire than their cost. In addition, HB 1A eliminates *e coli* and toxic cyanobacteria testing at 158 freshwater beaches, thereby compromising public safety.

The proposed total elimination of the

- Rivers Management and Protection Program (RSA 483),
- Lakes Management and Protection Program (RSA 483-A),
- Volunteer Rivers Assessment Program, and
- Volunteer Lakes Assessment Program

will result in the loss of extremely cost-effective programs that oversee the health and encourage the economic value of New Hampshire's public waters – a value that approaches *\$2 billion dollars*. New Hampshire's drinking water supplies, tourism economy, real estate values and natural resources suffer when water quality declines. It is fact that the State's economic interest lies with remaining attentive and responsive to water quality issues.

The LMPP and RMPP alone provide education, outreach, technical support, and coordination of efforts to address water quality issues around the state for:

- Water-dependent businesses that wish to ensure their economic viability, such as the NH Marine Trades Association and the New Hampshire Association of Realtors.
- Municipal departments and boards seeking to improve their planning and development decisions
- Volunteer lake and river groups that need to assess and plan for the health of their water resources.
- Resolving conflicts between a variety of lake users.
- Staffing and for the Lakes Management Advisory Committee. The LMAC and RMAC are comprised of state agency representatives and Governor and Council appointed volunteers who are charged with addressing the lake- and river-related concerns of the private sector including NH's industry, hydroelectric, water supply, tourism, real estate and marine trades interests; state agency and academic public sector interests; as well as non-profit and conservation interests.

In regard to the benefits of retaining the VLAP and VRAP programs in the 2012 budget, the needs are clear:

- Leveraging 4,300 hours of volunteer time each year to collect high quality, reportable data for 2024 miles of the state's rivers and over 300 lakes.
- Significant savings to the State: the value of volunteer time in 2010 alone equals \$86,000; it would be a substantially higher cost if the state paid professionals to collect this data.
- This volunteer data comprises 40% of the data that NH DES reports to the US EPA to comply with the Clean Water Act.

The loss of the VLAP and VRAP coordinators would eliminate the only support these volunteers need to succeed (i.e., training, sampling equipment, and staff to compile and analyze the water quality data.) Without the guidance provided by these programs, many of these volunteer groups will likely cease to function.

Finally, in regard to HB 1-A, eliminating the Freshwater Beach Testing Program seriously underestimates the need to continue testing for contaminants such as *e coli* and toxic cyanobacteria. New Hampshire's beaches experience increasing usage each year while at the same time, health-related beach closures have not abated.

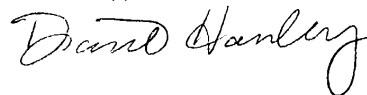
- Since 2001, **563 beaches on our lakes and rivers around the state were issued beach advisories for fecal bacteria** by NH DES.
- In 2010, **9% of the 652 beach tests conducted by NH DES were issued beach advisories for fecal coliform.**
- In 2010, **12 advisories and warnings were posted for cyanobacteria.**
- **There will be no mechanism to take the place of the testing for 158 beaches in NH.**

State Government has a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of the Public Waters of New Hampshire. HB-1A's elimination of the Freshwater Beach Testing Program will shift these costs to municipalities, businesses and/or volunteer groups - if they can find the resources to do so. Other beaches will simply not be tested. This is an unacceptable public health policy.

The LMAC strongly urges you to ensure that these cost-effective and crucial programs continue to be funded. To allow these cuts to remain would lead to economic losses far greater than that achieved by cutting these programs.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. If you have any questions regarding our testimony please do not hesitate to contact me at [dhanley@metrocast.net](mailto:dhanley@metrocast.net) or (603) 524-7821.

Sincerely,



Diane Hanley, Chair  
Lakes Management Advisory Committee

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NH FISH AND GAME COMMISSION - STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE  
UNH SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY - NH BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION - NH TRAVEL COUNCIL  
MUNICIPAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION - MUNICIPAL PLANNING BOARD - ELECTED MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL  
NH LAKES ASSOCIATION - CONSERVATION COMMUNITY - NH ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS - NH MARINE TRADES  
ASSOCIATION - NH FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT - NH DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
- NH DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY - NH OFFICE OF ENERGY AND PLANNING - NH DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
MARKETS AND FOOD - NH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION