

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

February 8, 2011

The Honorable James Garrity, Chairman
Science, Technology and Energy Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 304
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 612 - An Act establishing a commission to study existing septic systems and potential new septic technologies

Dear Chairman Garrity and Members of the Committee:

The Lakes Management Advisory Committee (LMAC) is writing to express its support for House Bill 612, which would establish a commission to study existing septic systems and potential new septic technologies.

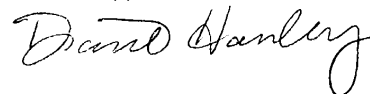
Studies across the country as well as here in New Hampshire have proven that septic systems, particularly older systems, are a possible source of nutrients and contaminants affecting our lakes and ponds. While the State has an effective program in place to permit the design and installation of subsurface sewage disposal systems, homeowners also need to properly maintain their systems to reduce the chance of pathogens, chemicals, pharmaceutical products and nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus from reaching our surface waters. Many properties surrounding our waterbodies, especially those in the southern portion of the state were historically developed and it is possible that the systems serving these properties are no longer fully effective at treating wastewater. Faulty or failed septic systems are not the only source of pollutants that can negatively impact water quality but once a waterbody is impaired, the cost for restoration is typically several hundred thousand dollars and sometimes much more.

Over the last few decades septic system technology has evolved and working with the industry to better understand these new systems and their applications would be time well spent since the State is obligated to protect the quality of its ground and surface water resources. The LMAC believes that establishing and authorizing this commission to assess the viability, effectiveness, and cost of these new technologies and issue a report of its findings and recommendations, would be worth undertaking.

The LMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with DES on the administration of RSA 483-A, the Lakes Management and Protection Act. The Governor and Council appointed Committee is comprised of members from academia, business, conservation organizations, lake associations, tourism, fish and game commission, marine trades, realtors, and municipal government. Among its other responsibilities, the LMAC reviews legislation relevant to the state's lakes and ponds and the Lakes Program, and advises the DES Commissioner on the merits of such legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. If you have any questions regarding our testimony please do not hesitate to contact Jacquie Colburn, Lakes Coordinator at (603) 271-2959.

Sincerely,



Diane Hanley, Chair
Lakes Management Advisory Committee

cc: Representative Millham
Senator Odell
Harry Stewart, DES (*via email*)
Jacquie Colburn, DES (*via email*)
LMAC members (*via email*)

Representative Kidder
Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner, DES (*via email*)
Paul Currier, DES (*via email*)
James Richardson, Governor's Office