

N.H. Rivers Management Advisory Committee

January 28, 2015

Representative Chris Christensen, Chairman
Resources, Recreation, and Development
Room 305
Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 272 Ham Branch River Watershed Nomination under RSA 483

Dear Chair Christensen and Members of the Committee:

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its support for House Bill 272, which designates the Ham Branch River and 13 of its tributary streams in Easton into the Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP), RSA 483, but its opposition to the exemption of the less than 4th order river segments from the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (SWQPA).

The RMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) on the administration of RSA 483. The Governor and Council appointed Committee is comprised of members from the business, agriculture, hydroelectric, municipal government, water supply, conservation, recreation, fish and game, and historical interests. Among its other responsibilities, the RMAC is charged with reviewing legislation relevant to the RMPP and with advising the DES Commissioner on the merits of such legislation.

The nomination to include the Ham Branch River Watershed into the RMPP was submitted for consideration on June 1, 2014. On June 23, 2014, the Ham Branch River Watershed Nominating Committee made a nomination presentation to the RMAC. The RMAC conducted a site visit of the river with the sponsors on September 29, 2014 and later that day, held a public meeting in Easton with the Rivers Coordinator to review and discuss the Rivers Program and the Ham Branch nomination. On November 10, 2014, the RMAC held a public hearing in Easton, again in cooperation with the Rivers Coordinator, to take official public comments on the nomination. The RMAC completed its review of the Ham Branch River Watershed nomination under RSA 483 at its November 18, 2014 meeting.

The RMAC was impressed with the level of public support demonstrated throughout the nomination process, and particularly at the public hearing. Approximately 39 people attended and all but one of the 20 people who testified were supportive of the designation of the Ham Branch River Watershed. Letters of endorsement were received from the Town of Easton Select Board and Conservation Commission.

After deliberation, the RMAC voted to recommend that the Ham Branch River Watershed be designated into the RMPP as proposed in the nomination submitted to the RMAC on June 1, which did not include an exemption from the SWQPA. The RMAC is opposed to the exemption of the less than 4th order river segments from the SWQPA and feels the amendment is bad precedent and spot legislation.

In conclusion, the RMAC supports HB 272, which would designate the Ham Branch River Watershed, into the Rivers Management and Protection Act, but strongly opposes the exemption of the less than 4th order river segments from the SWQPA.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at (603) 466-8149 or kkimball@outdoors.org.

Voting Members:

Kenneth D. Kimball
Chair
Recreational Interests

Michele L. Tremblay
Vice Chair
Conservation
Community

Anne Krantz
Historic/Archeological
Interests

Alan Larter
Granite State
Hydropower
Association

Fredrick J. McNeill
Municipal Officer

Roger Noonan
Agricultural Community

Allan G. Palmer
Business & Industry
Association

James W. Ryan
NH Fish & Game
Commission

Larry T. Spencer
Conservation
Commissions

Donald L. Ware
Public Water Suppliers

Vacant
Local River Management
Advisory Committees

Non-Voting Members:

Mark Hemmerlein
NH Department of
Transportation

Patrick Hummel
NH Department of
Resources and
Economic
Development

John Magee
NH Fish & Game
Department

Gail McWilliam Jellie
NH Department of
Agriculture,
Markets & Food

Elizabeth Peck
NH Department of
Safety

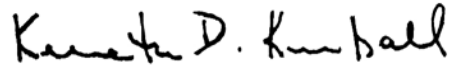
Susan Slack
NH Office of
Energy & Planning

Staff:

Jacquie Colburn
Rivers and Lakes
Coordinator, NH DES

Tracie Sales
Watershed Planner
NH DES

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth D. Kimball". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Kenneth D. Kimball, Ph.D., Chair

cc: Representative Ford
Representative R. Brown
Senator Woodburn
Thomas Burack, NH DES Commissioner
Eugene Forbes, Director, Water Division, DES (*via email*)
Ted Diers, Administrator, Watershed Management Bureau, DES
Jacquie Colburn, Rivers Coordinator, Watershed Management Bureau, DES
Roy Stever, Ham Branch River Nominating Committee (*via email*)
RMAC Members (*via email*)
Local River Management Advisory Committee Chairs (*via email*)