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Staff:

**Tracie Sales**  
Program Manager

**Jen Drociak**  
Watershed Coordinator

**Mariah Mitchell**  
Program Assistant

N.H. Rivers Management and Protection Program

# N.H. Rivers Management Advisory Committee

February 13, 2019

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

**RE: HB 326** *relative to the definition of a prime wetland.*

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its support for House Bill 326, which further defines prime wetland for local protection in fill and dredge permits.

The proposed expanded definition of prime wetland would allow municipalities to include narrower portions, or “fingers” of wetlands in their designation. These narrower portions could be fringe wetlands, low-gradient feeder stream systems, or connectors between two larger wetland systems and provide significant habitat for macroinvertebrate, fish, birds, and wildlife. As such, these narrower portions can provide a significant contribution to the wetland functions and values of the prime wetland. The RMAC believes the current exclusion of these narrower portions is arbitrary and not based upon science. Thus, the RMAC supports HB 326 to allow these narrower portions to be included as prime wetlands.

The RMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to administer RSA 483, the Rivers Management and Protection Program. The Governor and Council appointed Committee is comprised of members from 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 Program and with advising the NHDES Commissioner on the merits of such legislation.

In conclusion, the RMAC supports HB 326 relative to the definition of a prime wetland because it would include sensitive narrower portions of these wetlands which can be as significant as the larger wetland itself in their functions and values.

The Honorable Suzanne Smith  
Chair, House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee  
HB 326 February 13, 2019  
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Should you have any questions regarding our testimony, please feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or [MLT@naturesource.net](mailto:MLT@naturesource.net).

Sincerely,



Michele L. Tremblay  
RMAC Chair

cc: Rep. Chuck Grassie  
Rep. Joshua Adjutant  
RMAC 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  
Local River Management Advisory Committee Chairs