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NH Fish & Game
Department

Gail McWilliam Jellie
NH Department of
Agriculture,
Markets & Food

Vacant
NH Department of
Natural and Cultural
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Staff:

Tracie Sales
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Jen Drociak
Watershed Coordinator

Mariah Mitchell
Program Assistant

N.H. Rivers Management and Protection Program

N.H. Rivers Management Advisory Committee

April 11, 2019

The Honorable Martha Fuller Clark, Chair
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 101
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 475 *relative to establishing a shoreland septic system study commission.*

Dear Chair Fuller Clark and Members of the Committee:

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill 475 as amended, which will establish a study commission to examine the impact of failing private shoreland septic systems on the state's public waterbodies. The RMAC supports this bill as amended by the House.

Septic systems installed without state approval, and those constructed prior to 1967 when inspections and state approval were first required, can include septic systems that inadequately treat wastewater due to their age or size that does not comport with renovations or expansions to the dwelling or other building. These inadequate or "failing" septic systems can lead to increased nutrient runoff into nearby surface waters, and unsafe levels of *E. coli* bacteria for swimmers, anglers, boaters, and surface water supplies. These pollutants can result in toxic cyanobacteria blooms that threaten the health of people, pets, and wildlife; resulting in public and private beach closures.

This bill would assemble stakeholders to find ways to address the inadequate private septic systems that are causing poor water quality in New Hampshire's rivers and lakes, threatening safe drinking water, recreation, and the economic value of these waterbodies. The study commission will study and produce findings and recommendations regarding the links between private property and public waters, the expense involved with septic system upgrades, and the single full-time New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Subsystems Surface Bureau enforcement coordinator for the entire state. The RMAC feels that these issues should be examined through a comprehensive study to determine the most effective method for identifying potential inadequate septic systems and determining what approaches can be taken to remedy these inadequacies.

The RMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with 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 the establishment of the shoreland septic system study commission authorized by HB 475 as amended.

Should you have any questions regarding our testimony, please feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or MLT@naturesource.net.

Sincerely,



Michele L. Tremblay
RMAC Chair

cc: Rep. Judith Spang
Sen. Jeb Bradley
Sen. Dan Feltes
Sen. Martha Fuller Clark
Sen. David Watters
Rep. Dennis Malloy
Rep. Lee Oxenham
RMAC Representatives
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES
Thomas O'Donovan, 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