



NH Rivers Management and Protection Program NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee



Policy and Procedure *for the* **RMAC Policy and Legislation Subcommittee**

Adopted: March 2014
Amended: December 2017
Amended: January 2018

Introduction

As part of its duties, the Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) routinely tracks and provides testimony on New Hampshire legislation relating to the Rivers Management and Protection Act. Topics tracked include instream flow, bills affecting rivers and watersheds in general, and laws affecting government boards and commissions.

The criteria and procedures outlined in this document provide guidance and enable the RMAC's Policy and Legislation Subcommittee to research, track, and recommend testimony on RMAC relevant legislation to the New Hampshire General Court. Any subcommittee of the RMAC, which is an advisory committee established by the New Hampshire legislature with members appointed by the Governor and the Executive Council, must comply with RSA 91-A, Access to Governmental Records and Meetings, also known as the "Right-to-Know" law.

Policy and Legislation Subcommittee Membership

To assist it with researching, tracking, and testifying on legislation, the RMAC has created a Policy and Legislation Subcommittee, composed of at least three voting members of the RMAC. The Chair of the RMAC, with advice from the full RMAC, appoints representatives of the RMAC to the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee, one of whom shall be the Vice Chair of the RMAC. Membership of the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee shall be reviewed annually by the RMAC Chair. The Vice Chair of the RMAC shall serve as the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee chair.

Process for Submission of Letters of Testimony

The Policy and Legislation Subcommittee Chair, with assistance from the Rivers Program staff, will identify legislation of concern to the RMAC. In a publically noticed meeting, the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee will review legislation and determine, by vote of a quorum (defined as a majority) of the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee members, which Legislative Service Requests (LSRs) and/or bills they recommend the RMAC track, comment on (with specific positions, conditions, and proposed revisions), or remove from the RMAC legislative tracking list. This list of recommended legislation will be presented by the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee to the RMAC for its review and approval.

RMAC Positions on LSRs and bills may include but are not limited to:

- Support – RMAC supports the legislation as proposed;
- Support with amendments or comments – RMAC supports the legislation, but with changes and/or amendments
- Oppose – RMAC opposes the legislation as proposed;

- Oppose but could support with amendments or modifications – RMAC opposes the legislation as proposed, but could support with described deletions, modifications and/or amendments;
- Track – Issue relevant to river protection but not significant enough to take a position on;
- Research – More information is needed before the RMAC can make a decision;
- Remove – Issue is not relevant to river protection and need not be tracked.

The Policy and Legislation Subcommittee will create a list of standing positions on legislation that is proposed on a regular basis, allowing the RMAC to respond quickly with a letter of testimony to certain predefined situations. This list of standing positions will be approved by a vote of the full RMAC, and will be reviewed and reapproved annually. The RMAC Chair and the Chair of the RMAC Policy and Legislation Subcommittee must both agree that the language of a bill fulfills the intent outlined in the list of standing positions in order for a letter of testimony to be submitted on behalf of the RMAC without a vote of the full committee.

For bills on which the RMAC has voted to take a position, Rivers Program staff will draft an appropriate letter of testimony for review by the RMAC Chair and the Chair of the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee. Once the letter has been approved, it will be signed by the RMAC Chair and submitted to the General Court. A Policy and Legislation Subcommittee member or other RMAC representative may elect to submit the letter in person and/or provide oral testimony.

In the event that a legislative position recommendation of the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee cannot be approved at a scheduled RMAC meeting due to a legislative letter of testimony deadline, upon consultation with the Rivers Coordinator, the RMAC Chair and Chair of the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee may recommend proceeding with the letter of testimony. This may occur when bill text is unavailable at the time of the RMAC meeting or when bill amendments substantially alter the intent or subject of the legislation. This option will be limited to bills on which the Policy and Legislation Subcommittee's members' recommendations are unanimous. In this circumstance, the process of drafting, approving, and submitting the letter will be the same as for a bill which has been voted on by the full RMAC, but Rivers Program staff will notify the full committee that this action is being taken by the subcommittee.

Adopted by the New Hampshire Rivers Management Advisory Committee on March 19, 2014 and revised on December 6, 2017 and January 19, 2018.