

Voting Members:

Michele L. Tremblay
Chair
Conservation
Community

Larry T. Spencer
Vice Chair
Conservation
Commissions

Victoria Bunker
Historic/Archeological
Interests

Christopher Hodgdon
NH Fish & Game
Commission

Mark Lombardi
Granite State
Hydropower
Association

Frederick J. McNeill
Municipal Officer

Allan G. Palmer
Business & Industry
Association

Ruth Ward
Local River Management
Advisory Committees

Donald L. Ware
Public Water Suppliers

Stewart Yeaton
Agricultural Community

Vacant
Recreational Interests

Non-Voting Members:

Peter Bowman
NH Department of
Natural and Cultural
Resources

Jennifer Gilbert
NH Office of
Strategic Initiatives

Mark Hemmerlein
NH Department of
Transportation

Shawn Jasper
NH Department of
Agriculture,
Markets & Food

John Magee
NH Fish & Game
Department

Meghan Wells
NH Department of
Safety

Staff:

Tracie Sales
Program Manager

Vacant
Watershed Coordinator

Vacant
Program Assistant

N.H. Rivers Management and Protection Program

N.H. Rivers Management Advisory Committee

February 19, 2021

The Honorable Edward Gordon, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 208
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 216 *An act relative to public notice of and access to meetings under the right to know law.*

Dear Chair Gordon and Members of the Committee:

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its support of House Bill 216, which will allow public bodies subject to RSA 91-A to meet remotely outside of a declared emergency.

The RMAC has found that attendance at remote RMAC meetings has been higher, both by committee representatives and members of the public, than when the RMAC met in person. While the committee prefers to meet in person when possible, allowing remote meetings permits busy volunteer committee members as well as the public to attend meetings during inclement weather or when they are not feeling well, and to join all or part of a meeting when schedules are tight. As volunteers, many are challenged to make the investment in travel including driving time and fuel costs. Staff in the Rivers Management and Protection Program have reported a similar increase in attendance at local river management advisory committee meetings by committee members and the public, as well as by guest consultants discussing proposed projects in the committee's area of jurisdiction. The tools and protocols for remote meetings are available and familiar now, and the RMAC would like to offer the remote meetings.

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 216 because it will permit boards and commissions such as the RMAC to meet remotely while still allowing public involvement in the committee's work.

The Honorable Edward Gordon
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
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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.

Sincerely,



Michele L. Tremblay
RMAC Chair

cc: Rep. Lucy Weber
RMAC Representatives
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES
Tom 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