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Program Assistant

# NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee

## NH Rivers Management and Protection Program



February 1, 2023

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

**RE: HB 214** *An act relative to limitations on the designation of a portion of the Merrimack River.*

Dear Chair Renzullo and Members of the Committee,

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its **support of House Bill 214**, which deletes archaic text relative to water withdrawals from the lower segment of the Merrimack River.

The RMAC supports this bill as introduced because

- The water withdrawal limitations established when the lower Merrimack River was designated in 1990 were designed to ensure that all of the river's historical uses could be maintained, not just as a drinking water source but also for hydropower, waste assimilation, recreation, irrigation, and wildlife habitat. Since 1990, NHDES has developed a permitting process for large water withdrawals which takes into account minimum river flows and other water uses to determine how much water can safely be withdrawn. This permitting process eliminates the need for the existing withdrawal limit.
- In addition, since 1990 the Instream Flow Program has been established under the Rivers Management and Protection Program, the same program under which the lower Merrimack River was designated. While the Instream Flow Program has not yet been implemented on the lower Merrimack River, the program will eventually scientifically determine how much water must remain in the river on a seasonal basis to ensure that the river's existing uses, including drinking water and wildlife, are supported to the maximum extent possible even during droughts. This program may well determine that withdrawals of more than 30 million gallons per day by Pennichuck Water Works will have no significant impact on the river or its users, especially during periods of high flows. Thus, the current limit on withdrawals is no longer necessary.

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 composed of members from business, agriculture, hydroelectric, municipal government, water supply, conservation, recreation, fish and game, and historical interests.

The Honorable Andrew Renzullo,  
Chair, House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee  
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Should you have any questions regarding our testimony in support of HB 214, feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or [MLT@naturesource.net](mailto:MLT@naturesource.net).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michele L. Tremblay".

Michele L. Tremblay, Chair

cc: Representatives Rung and N. Murphy  
Senator Chandley  
RMAC Representatives  
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES