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Larry T. Spencer

Vice Chair Conservation Commissions

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NH Fish & Game Commission

Frederick J. McNeill Municipal Officer

Madeleine Mineau

Granite State Hydropower Assoc.

Robert M. Roseen Recreational Interests

**Donald L. Ware** Public Water Suppliers

Vacant

**Agricultural Community** 

Vacant

Business & Industry Association

Vacant

Historic/Archeological Interests

Vacant

Local River Management Advisory Committees

**Non-Voting Members** 

**Peter Bowman** 

NH Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources

Natasha Cole

NH Department of Safety

Jennifer Gilbert

NH Dept. of Business and Economic Affairs

**Mark Hemmerlein** 

NH Department of Transportation

Shawn Jasper

NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food

John Magee

NH Fish & Game Department

STAFF

Tracie Sales
Program Administrator

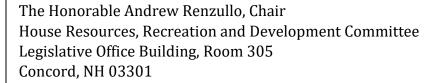
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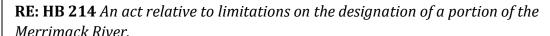
Program Assistant

## **NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee**

NH Rivers Management and Protection Program

February 1, 2023





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withdrawals which takes into account minimum river flows and other water uses to determine how much water can safely be withdrawn.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 HB 214 February 1, 2023 Page 2

Should you have any questions regarding our testimony in support of HB 214, feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or <a href="MLT@naturesource.net">MLT@naturesource.net</a>.

Sincerely,

Michele L. Tremblay, Chair

ec: Representatives Rung and N. Murphy

Senator Chandley RMAC Representatives

Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES