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NH Fish & Game  
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Cultural Resources

**Natasha Cole**  
NH Department of  
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**Jennifer Gilbert**  
NH Dept. of Business  
and Economic Affairs

**Mark Hemmerlein**  
NH Department of  
Transportation

**Shawn Jasper**  
NH Dept. of Agriculture,  
Markets & Food

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NH Fish & Game  
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STAFF

**Tracie Sales**  
Program Administrator

**Vacant**  
Program Assistant

# NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee

NH Rivers Management and Protection Program



February 21, 2023

The Honorable Thomas Walsh, Chair  
House Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 203  
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: HB 137** *An act relative to boating safety equipment rules and vessel numbering rules, and establishing a committee to study boat registrations fees.*

Dear Chair Walsh and Members of the Committee,

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its **support of House Bill 137**, which establishes a committee to study boat registration fees.

The RMAC supports this bill because

- With each boat registration, New Hampshire collects currently \$17.50 of fees that are allocated to search and rescue, public boat access, coastal pier maintenance, and the lake restoration fund;
- This current practice is out of compliance with US Coast Guard regulations and requires immediate action to keep these vital programs funded and to not jeopardize the state's federal grant for safety programs;
- The lake restoration fund is the sole source of money for the state's program to prevent and manage aquatic invasive species. This includes providing grants to non-profit organizations and municipalities to address aquatic invasive species;
- Aquatic invasive species spread rapidly if left untreated. Their dense populations hinder boat navigation, negatively affect recreational enjoyment, and harm populations of native species;
- Having a reliable, dedicated funding source that is adequate to combat aquatic invasive species is critical to the public's continued enjoyment of New Hampshire waterways, and the economic benefits that result;
- This is an issue affecting multiple states. Other states that have recently separated invasive species fees from boat registration fees in order to comply with Coast Guard regulations have lost a significant amount of funding; and
- Passage of this bill allows time for agencies and advocates to work with the Coast Guard and federal stakeholders to explore potential federal solutions.

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,

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Chair, House Transportation Committee  
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hydroelectric, municipal government, water supply, conservation, recreation, fish and game, and historical interests.

Should you have any questions regarding our testimony in support of HB 137, feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or [MLT@naturesource.net](mailto:MLT@naturesource.net).

Sincerely,



Michele L. Tremblay, Chair

ec: Representatives Creighton, Vail, Harvey-Bolia, Harb, J. MacDonald, Post, Healey, and Horgan  
RMAC Representatives  
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES