

VOTING MEMBERS

Michele L. Tremblay
Chair
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Community

Larry T. Spencer
Vice Chair
Conservation
Commissions

Christopher Hodgdon
NH Fish & Game
Commission

Frederick J. McNeill
Municipal Officer

Madeleine Mineau
Granite State
Hydropower Assoc.

Cory Ritz
Local River Management
Advisory Committees

Robert M. Roseen
Recreational Interests

Donald L. Ware
Public Water Suppliers

Vacant
Agricultural Community

Vacant
Business & Industry
Association

Vacant
Historic/Archeological
Interests

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

Vacant
Program Assistant

NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee

NH Rivers Management and Protection Program



April 12, 2023

The Honorable Bob Lynn, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 208
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 250 *An act relative to remote participation in government meetings.*

Dear Chair Lynn and Members of the Committee,

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its **opposition to Senate Bill 250**, which states that in-person attendance is expected at the meetings of public bodies.

The RMAC opposes this bill because

- Our experience was that remote meetings during the pandemic increased attendance and participation at public meetings,
- The state's local river management advisory committees and other state and municipal groups have reported similar experiences,
- Many volunteers in New Hampshire are experiencing issues with driving during inclement weather and after sundown,
- Remote participation increases the ability for elderly or disabled volunteers who are unable to drive to still participate in civic life, and
- Current technology allows bodies to conduct meetings effectively and efficiently in a remote setting.

Several of the local advisory committees for the 19 designated rivers in the state have difficulty meeting quorum requirements or have lost members who are unable to drive an hour or more to meetings, including at night or in inclement weather. Having a remote attendance option that could apply to all public bodies in the state would allow greater participation in New Hampshire's culture of volunteer-based civic engagement. This bill increases the burden on the chairs to enforce in-person attendance of members.

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 Bob Lynn
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
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Should you have any questions regarding our testimony in opposition to SB 250, feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or MLT@naturesource.net.

Sincerely,

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

Michele L. Tremblay, Chair

cc: Representative B. Boyd
RMAC Representatives
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES