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Cultural Resources

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NH Department of  
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NH Dept. of Agriculture,  
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**Tracie Sales**  
Program Administrator

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Program Assistant

# NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee

## NH Rivers Management and Protection Program



May 2, 2023

The Honorable James Gray, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
State House, Room 103  
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: HB 2** *An act relative to state fees, funds, revenues, and expenditures.*

Dear Chair Gray and Members of the Committee,

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is composed of members from business, agriculture, hydroelectric, municipal government, water supply, conservation, recreation, fish and game, and historical interests. The RMAC is writing to comment on several provisions in HB 2.

The RMAC **supports creation of a PCB Assistance Fund** (page 14, sections 36 - 38):

- In New Hampshire, 104 waterbodies are impaired due to the presence of PCBs. Although banned four decades ago, PCB contamination persists.
- PCBs affect animal and human health. The Fund would help clean up our environment and protect public health.

The RMAC **opposes exempting existing highway rights-of-way from prime wetlands designations or their adjacent buffers** (page 35, section 101):

- This provision would negate parts of prime wetlands previously designated by cities and towns, as they are enabled to do under RSA 482-A:15.
- The designation process includes public comment opportunities and review by New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES).
- Wetlands are typically designated as prime based on their large size, ecological importance, role in flood protection, or ability to sustain threatened species. Wetlands can provide these functions even if parts of them fall within highway rights-of-way.

The RMAC **supports making an appropriation to the PFAS Response Fund and charging NHDES with new duties relative to PFAS** (pages 108- 110, sections 350 - 356):

- PFAS contamination has been found throughout the state, including at sites where it was not expected to be found.
- The extent of contamination is still unknown, and there is a lack of systematic monitoring to determine its presence in soil, groundwater, and surface water.
- In addition to threatening public health, PFAS is present in fish and wildlife species such as common loons. It has been shown to bioaccumulate, but much is still unknown about how it may be affecting aquatic ecosystems.

The RMAC **supports creation of the Cyanobacteria Mitigation Loan Program, including an associated appropriation** (page 128 - 130, sections 420 - 423).

- Cyanobacteria blooms are increasing in severity, frequency, and duration.
- Blooms negatively affect river and lake ecosystems and the public's enjoyment of them.

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- Blooms reduce the economic value associated with our rivers and lakes, making investment in their prevention an important priority.
- Addressing blooms and the nutrient pollution that causes them is costly and few funding sources already exist to prevent or mitigate blooms.
- Cost often prohibits implementation of existing plans to reduce cyanobacteria blooms in order to protect water quality and public health.
- This provision would complement the work currently being done by NHDES and stakeholders to develop a statewide strategy to address the causes and consequences of cyanobacteria blooms.

The RMAC **supports the House's removal of provisions to eliminated licensure requirements, associated licensure boards, and the apprenticeship program for natural scientists and foresters.** The Governor's proposal would have detrimentally affected water quality, created confusion, and increased permit review times.

The RMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with the NHDES to administer RSA 483, the Rivers Management and Protection Program. Should you have any questions regarding our testimony commenting on HB 2, feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or [MLT@naturesource.net](mailto:MLT@naturesource.net).

Sincerely,



Michele L. Tremblay, Chair

cc: Chairman Kenneth Weyler, House Finance Committee  
RMAC Representatives  
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES