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NH Department of  
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**John Magee**  
NH Fish & Game  
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Program Assistant

# NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee

NH Rivers Management and Protection Program



January 17, 2024

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

**RE: HB 1121** *An act relative to creating certain wetlands permit exemptions after a natural disaster or flooding event.*

Dear Chair Renzullo and Members of the Committee,

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to comment on **House Bill 1121**, which would allow homeowners to move debris in waterways after a natural disaster or flood.

The RMAC recommends sending this bill to study because

- Improperly conducted work can worsen future floods and lead to substantial unintended consequences for property owners downstream and across stream from where the work is done;
- Enforcement of the bill as written would be difficult, as there is not currently a way to document pre-storm conditions;
- There are already mechanisms for permit exemptions in emergency conditions, so it is unclear if the bill is needed;
- Lands across, below, and up from the subject sites may be affected adversely from work done without understanding of river systems and the expertise to conduct the work;
- Work conducted under this bill would not have oversight to ensure it is done in hydrologically appropriate ways; and
- The state does not have adequate staff to document conditions on the ground prior to or after emergency events in order to ensure that the changes homeowners make under this bill are congruent with its intended purpose. There is thus a high likelihood of the provision being abused and inappropriate or damaging work being done.

The RMAC acknowledges that property owners should have the ability to protect their property from damage, and that floods are becoming more common and more severe. However, as written this bill likely would have significant unintended consequences, which is why RMAC stakeholders feel sending it to study for refinement would be an appropriate approach.

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,

The Honorable Andrew Renzullo  
Chair, House Resources, Recreation, and Development 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 comments on HB 1121, 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 Aron, Janvrin, Lekas, Wallace, Harvey-Bolia, Creighton, Cloutier, Buco, and B. Sullivan

RMAC Representatives  
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES