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STAFF

Tracie Sales
Program Administrator

Vacant
Program Assistant

NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee

NH Rivers Management and Protection Program



January 29, 2024

The Honorable Michael Vose, Chair
House Science, Technology and Energy Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 304
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1576 *An act relative to allowing property owners to opt out of public utilities.*

Dear Chair Vose and Members of the Committee,

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its **opposition to House Bill 1576**, which allows homeowners to opt out of public utilities.

The RMAC opposes this bill because

- Stormwater and out-of-date or improperly functioning septic systems are the two largest sources of pollution to New Hampshire waterbodies;
- This pollution can threaten public health, impede safe recreation, and negatively affect business revenues and property values;
- When municipalities opt in to stormwater, public septic, or sewer utilities they can be effective tools at managing the causes of this pollution;
- Water quality is protected only when the entire community participates;
- The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) often recommends that communities consider developing public septic, sewer, or stormwater utilities in locations where data indicate that doing so would address a community's concerns about water quality issues;
- The cost effectiveness of public utilities typically depends on full participation within the geography covered by those utilities; and
- Under current law, the decision to create a stormwater or septic utility is a local one made by individual municipalities. That means that there are existing mechanisms for homeowners opposed to a utility to voice their concerns.

The RMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with 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.

Should you have any questions regarding our testimony in opposition to HB 1576, 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: Representatives Layon, Cushman, D. Kelley, and Sirois
RMAC Representatives
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES

29 Hazen Drive; PO Box 95; Concord, NH 03302-0095; Tel: [603-796-2615](tel:603-796-2615)
<https://www.rmac.des.nh.gov/>