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NH Dept. of Agriculture,
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NH Dept. of Business
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STAFF

Tracie Sales
Program Administrator

Vacant
Program Assistant

NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee

NH Rivers Management and Protection Program



January 31, 2024

House Ways and Means Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 202
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1613 *An act establishing a trust fund for money from soil and water environmental contamination court settlements.*

Dear Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its **support with a condition of House Bill 1613**, which directs money from environmental contamination court settlements to a trust fund. The RMAC's support is conditional on clarifying the bill so that the flow of money into existing designated funds for environmental protection and remediation is not affected.

The RMAC offers these comments on the bill:

- The RMAC **supports** creating an environmental trust fund into which settlement money could be deposited instead of into the general fund, and which would be used to remediate the types of harm that prompted the settlement;
- The bill as drafted likely would have unintended consequences for numerous existing designated funds that currently accept settlement money and use it to support environmental protection and restoration;
- The RMAC **opposes** any provision that would affect the future flow of revenue into the existing Rivers and Lakes Management and Protection Fund (RSA 483:13, II); and
- Reducing revenue inflow to existing designated funds would hamper the ability of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to conduct existing types of environmental protection and restoration work, or would increase the amount of general funding that NHDES requires.

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 regarding HB 1613, 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 Meuse, McWilliams, W. Thomas, and N. Murphy
RMAC Representatives
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES