



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services

Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner



*Celebrating 25 Years of Protecting
New Hampshire's Environment*

March 12, 2012

The Honorable Andrew Renzullo, Chairman
House Resources, Recreation, and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 303
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: SB 142-FN, relative to reorganizing the permitting process within the Department of Environmental Services.

Dear Representative Renzullo:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 142, as amended by the Senate, relative to reorganizing the permitting process within the Department of Environmental Services (DES). DES strongly supports this bill which is the product of the hard work of many stakeholders over the past 15 months, especially the bill sponsors, Senators Odell and Luther.

If enacted, SB 142 would establish a new streamlined process for integrated land development permits that applicants could choose, at their discretion, as an alternative to obtaining separate permits from up to four different DES programs specified in the bill (wetlands, alteration of terrain, subdivision and individual sewage disposal, and shoreland water quality protection). This would result in a more streamlined permitting process for applicants that could also provide improved environmental outcomes. SB 142 would also set the stage for improvements in the coordination of permitting efforts between DES and municipalities by strongly encouraging municipal participation and collaboration in pre-application meetings and technical reviews on projects for which applicants have requested integrated permitting.

SB 142 would not change the total permit application fees paid by applicants but would require prepayment of application fees on a pro-rated basis based on project complexity during the pre-application review process to provide funds to support DES staff time during the project development phase. The bill would also authorize DES to establish four positions within the Land Resources Management Program, with two proposed to be supported by state general funds and two by existing fee funds. We expect that program staffing for this program would ramp up gradually to the authorized level as the actual demand for the program increases over time as the economy improves.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this bill. If you have any questions, please call Rene Pelletier of my staff at 271-2951 or me at 271-2958.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Senator Bob Odell
Senator James Luther

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