



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 John Reagan, Chair
Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 202
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RE: SB 363, an act establishing a commission to study the regulation and licensing of youth camps, including youth skills camp.

Dear Chairman Reagan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 363 which, as amended by the Senate, creates a commission to study how youth skill camps are currently regulated. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) supports this bill.

Under RSA 485-A and administrative rules Env-Wq 900, the Department has the authority to license youth recreational camps. Our duties related to this authority include facility inspections, public health monitoring, and ensuring staff eligibility.

The definition of a youth recreational camp is “a program that operates for at least 10 days per license year for the purpose of providing recreational opportunities, or a combination of recreational and instruction, to 10 or more youth per day, at a place which is continuously or periodically used for such purposes. The term includes residence camps and seasonal and year-round day camps.” (Env-Wq 902.29).

This definition excludes camps of a shorter duration or that conduct programs that are solely instructional in nature, such as week-long skill camps. Such programs are also excluded from the definition of child care facilities regulated under RSA 170:E. As a result of these exclusions, no criminal background check on staff or public health related monitoring is currently required for these camps.

This study commission will examine the current exclusion of skill camps as well as the overall regulation and funding of the regulatory oversight function for youth camps. DES strongly supports the comprehensive nature of this study and believes a thorough examination of the protections in place for children attending camps excluded under current law is warranted.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. Please feel free to call Sarah Pillsbury at 271-1168, or me at 271-2958, if you have any questions or need additional information

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas S. Burack". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'T' and 'B'.

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Senator Matthew Houde