



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner
April 16, 2013

The Honorable Shannon Chandley, Chairperson
Resources, Recreation and Development
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, NH 03301

Re: SB 163 establishing a commission to recommend legislation to prepare for projected sea level rise and other coastal hazards.

Dear Chairperson Chandley:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 163, which would establish a commission to recommend legislation to prepare for projected sea level rise and other coastal hazards. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) supports the bill as amended.

Modeling performed by researchers at the UNH Jackson Estuarine Lab has shown that, if the sea level should rise by 2 feet, the frequency of storm surges causing significant damage would increase by a factor of 10. This means that, under this scenario, a 100-year frequency storm surge under current sea level conditions could become a 10-year frequency event. In other words, with sea level rise, both the frequency when significant storm damage would occur and the annualized costs for damage repair would increase dramatically. In this context, planning for sea level rise makes sense to ensure that adjustments can be made gradually to provide reasonable protection for coastal zone properties and infrastructure investments. If enacted, SB 163 would establish a commission to further study this issue and consider whether legislation or other measures are warranted. We believe that this would be a valuable exercise to help New Hampshire to plan for projected sea level rise and other coastal hazards.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this bill. DES looks forward to participating in the Commission upon its establishment. Please feel free to call Ted Diers at 271-7940 or me at 271-2958 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Senators Watters, Stiles, and Fuller Clark
Representatives Borden, Hooper, Spang, Schroadter and Watrous