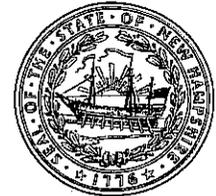




The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

February 9, 2010

The Honorable Judith T. Spang, Chair
Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RE: HB 1322 relative to the dam management review committee

Dear Chairman Spang:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1322, which would amend RSA 482:93 to revise membership on the Dam Management Review Committee. The Committee is currently made up of the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) or designee, four members from the Resources, Recreation and Development Committee and four members from the Senate Environment Committee. Under the bill as currently written, the four members from the Resources, Recreation and Development Committee would be replaced by one member from the Public Works and Highways Committee, one member from the Ways and Means Committee, and one member from the Executive Departments and Administration Committee. DES supports the representation of additional House Committees on the Dam Management Review Committee, but would prefer that the Committee continue to include some representation from the Resources, Recreation and Development Committee.

The primary responsibility of the Dam Management Review Committee is to develop policies and procedures to recommend to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, the House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee and the Senate Environment Committee on matters relating to the acquisition, repair, use and management of dams by the state. One of the greatest challenges the state is currently facing regarding the use and management of dams by the state is the imminent shortfall in the State Dam Maintenance Fund, which is the sole source of funding for the operation, maintenance, repair and reconstruction of the 274 state-owned dams. Over the past year, DES has worked closely with a subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee on this problem; and the addition of a representative from the Ways and Means Committee, as well as representatives from other House Committees with responsibilities for oversight over state-owned infrastructure, to the Dam Management Review Committee would provide important perspectives to the Committee as we work together to identify sources of funding for the operation, maintenance and repair of state-owned dams.

However, the Dam Management Review Committee has also been a venue for DES to present to the Legislature the status of dams and the dam safety program in New Hampshire, educate legislators on the management of the state's most critical water resources, and receive guidance and discuss policy for dams and dam safety. Since the Resources, Recreation and Development Committee has traditionally been the House policy committee with oversight over these issues, DES feels that it is important that some representation of this committee continue on the Dam Management Review Committee.

DES Web site: www.des.nh.gov

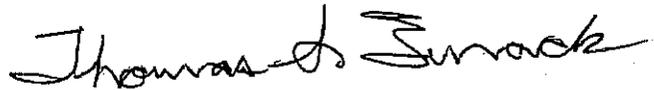
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Please note that on January 28, 2010, the HB 2 Committee on Committees voted to add the Dam Management Review Committee to HB 1690, which, if enacted, would repeal the Committee, along with the other committees the HB 2 Committee voted to repeal.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. Please call either me at 271-2958 or Jim Gallagher at 271-1961, if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,



Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Representative William Hatch
Representative Susan Almy
Representative Ronald Mack