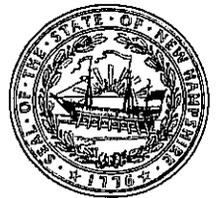




The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

January 20, 2010

The Honorable Martha Fuller Clark, Chairman
Energy, Environment and Economic Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 102
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 442, relative to the grant program to administer exotic aquatic plant prevention

Dear Chairman Fuller Clark:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 442, which would amend RSA 487:26 to increase the portion of funds allocated for milfoil and other exotic plant prevention grants from "up to 2/3" to "a minimum of 3/4" of the moneys distributed from the fund. The legislation would also limit personnel costs for the program and related projects to one full-time position. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) opposes the personnel cost provision in this bill.

The personnel cost provision of the bill would result in a significant reduction in DES' ability to administer exotic aquatic plant programs. The Lake Restoration and Preservation Fund supports three related programs, as described in RSA 487:17 to RSA 487:32. These are: 1) Clean Lakes; 2) Exotic Aquatic Plant Control; 3) Exotic Aquatic Plants Prevention. The bill appears to limit DES' personnel expenditures for these programs to one full time position. The current biennial budget for the Fund includes two full time personnel, two summer interns, overtime, and some additional funds for support staff and occasional work by other technical staff. The work and accomplishments of these programs are well documented in the Report of the Exotic Species Program 2006-2008. New Hampshire is a national leader in control of exotic aquatic species, thanks to the legislation that has created and funded the programs, and to the excellent work of DES. This work would be significantly restricted if this bill is enacted. The language in paragraph II would appear to rescind the biennial budget passed in 2009. This would cause severe reduction in DES' ability to operate these programs in 2010 and beyond.

DES supports paragraph I of the bill, which would increase the allocation of funds for exotic aquatic plant prevention from "up to 2/3" to a "minimum of 3/4" of the funds distributed, with the remainder allocated for research. Our experience administering the grant program over the past several years indicates that a greater proportion of the funds should be allocated to the prevention grants. Specifically, the Lake Host program, and a new project to track Didymo infestations would benefit from additional grant funding.

We recommend that the bill be amended to remove paragraph II. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. Please call either me at 271-2958, or Jody Connor at 271-3414, if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,


Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Senator Merrill
Representative Beaulieu
Representative DiFrancia
Representative Drisko

Senator Reynolds
Representative French
Representative Millham

DES Web site: www.des.nh.gov

P.O. Box 95, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03302-0095

Telephone: (603) 271-2457 • Fax: (603) 271-7894 • TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964