



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 Carol M. McGuire, Chairman
House Executive Departments and Administration Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 306
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1435, establishing a committee to oversee the department of environmental services;

Dear Chairman McGuire:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1435, as amended by 2012-0510h, establishing a department of environmental services oversight committee. As amended, this legislation would establish a legislative oversight committee for DES consisting of the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and ranking minority member of each of three house committees and one senate committee. The committee's activities would be for the purpose of supporting a cost effective, comprehensive, coordinated system of environmental services, and would include quarterly meetings to which DES would be invited, the review of quarterly reports from DES on the number and kind of complaints, appeals and final actions taken, the review of all statutes administered by DES at least once every 6 years to identify needed changes, and the review of any other topics deemed helpful by either DES or the committee.

The Department of Environmental Services (DES) welcomes legislative oversight of its efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the state's environmental laws. DES has been privileged over its 25 years of existence to work closely with a number of legislative committees, including particularly in recent years three committees of the House of Representatives (Environment and Agriculture; Resources, Recreation & Development; and Science, Technology & Energy), as well as one Senate committee (Energy & Natural Resources). Over the years it has been DES's experience that these committees have provided very good oversight of DES's programs and activities, and DES has developed regular and effective communications with the leadership of all of these committees.

It has been DES's experience that informal meetings between the DES leadership and legislative committee leadership can be a very effective communications forum. Accordingly, as an interim measure to assist in determining whether it is necessary to form an additional oversight committee, I would be pleased to host regular joint meetings with the chairmen, vice-chairmen and ranking minority members of all four of the

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legislative committees that currently have oversight of DES-administered statutes. In addition, DES would welcome the opportunity to explore with these existing committees the possibility of creating a schedule of oversight activities to ensure that each of the major statutes administered by DES is the subject of legislative oversight hearings on a regular, periodic schedule of approximately every six to ten years. This process could include consideration of the recodification of all of the statutes administered by DES.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this legislation. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at 271-2958.

Sincerely,



Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Representative Andrew Renzullo
Representative Laurence Rappaport