



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services

Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner



*Celebrating 25 Years of Protecting
New Hampshire's Environment*

April 18, 2012

The Honorable Russell E. Prescott, Chairman
Senate Internal Affairs Committee
State House, Room 100
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1435, establishing a liaison committee to monitor the DES

Dear Chairman Prescott:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1435, as amended by the House, establishing a liaison committee to monitor the department of environmental services (DES). As amended, this legislation would establish a Department of Environmental Services Liaison Committee consisting of the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and ranking minority member of each of three house committees and one senate committee. The committee's charge would be to monitor the department, to support a cost effective, comprehensive, coordinated system of environmental services, and to meet to review quarterly reports from DES on the number and kind of complaints, appeals and final actions taken, to review all statutes administered by DES at least once every 6 years to identify needed changes, and to review proposed legislation and rules affecting DES and any other topics deemed helpful by either DES or the committee.

The Department of Environmental Services 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 or liaison committee, I would be pleased to host regular joint meetings with the chairmen, vice-chairmen and ranking minority members of all four of the 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

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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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas S. Burack". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "T".

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: House and Senate Sponsors