



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Service

Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner



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

January 12, 2012

The Honorable Jeb Bradley, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 102
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RE: SB 363, an act relative to criminal background checks for volunteers and employees at youth skill camps.

Dear Senator Bradley:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 363. We understand there is an amendment to SB 363 which would create a committee to study how youth skill camps are currently regulated. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) supports this amendment.

Under RSA 485-A and administrative rules Env-Wq 900, the Department has the authority to license youth recreational camps. Our duties related to this authority include facility inspections, public health monitoring, and ensuring staff eligibility.

The definition of a youth recreational camp is "a program that operates for at least 10 days per license year for the purpose of providing recreational opportunities, or a combination of recreational and instruction, to 10 or more youth per day, at a place which is continuously or periodically used for such purposes. The term includes residence camps and seasonal and year-round day camps." (Env-Wq 902.29).

This definition excludes camps of a shorter duration or with programs that are solely instructional in nature, such as week-long skill camps. Such programs are also excluded from the definition of child care facilities regulated under RSA 170:E. As a result of these exclusions, no criminal background check on staff or public health related monitoring is currently required for these camps.

This study commission will examine the current exclusion of skill camps as well as the overall regulation and funding of the regulatory oversight function for youth camps. DES strongly supports the comprehensive nature of this study and believes a thorough examination of the protections in place for children attending camps excluded under current law is warranted.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. Please feel free to call Sarah Pillsbury at 271-1168, or me at 271-2958, if you have any questions or need additional information

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Senator Matthew Houde

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