



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner
April 15, 2013

The Honorable Shannon Chandley, Chairperson
Resources, Recreation and Development
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, NH 03301

Re: SB 164 authorizing coastal management provisions in master plans

Dear Chairperson Chandley:

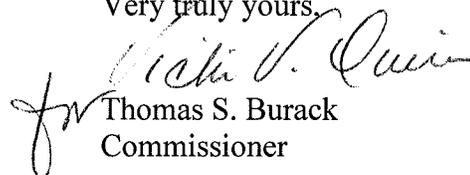
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 164, which would authorize coastal management provisions in master plans. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) supports this bill, but would prefer the bill to be amended as described below.

SB 164 would authorize a coastal management section in the master plans for coastal communities to address planning needs in preparation for the potential for coastal property or habitat loss caused by increased frequency of storm surges and flooding. This bill is timely because scientific projections indicate that these problems will become worse in the future. For example, modeling performed by researchers at the UNH Jackson Estuarine Lab has shown that, if the sea level should rise by 2 feet, the frequency of storm surges causing significant damage would increase by a factor of 10. This suggests that both the frequency of significant storm damage and the costs of that damage may increase dramatically. More local planning for sea level rise can ensure that adjustments will be made gradually to provide reasonable protection for properties, infrastructure investments and important habitat. If enacted, SB 164 would provide New Hampshire municipalities with clear authorization to plan for the projected increased frequency of storm surge, flooding, and inundation, ultimately to the long term benefit of New Hampshire's environment and economy.

The Department would be supportive of an amendment to the bill as has been articulated by Senator Watters. He suggested that the first provision of the bill (which tasks the Office of Energy and Planning with reviewing and reporting on the current state of hazard science) be struck and added into Senate Bill 163. In fact, SB 163 was passed by the Senate with that amendment, however, the provision remained in SB 164, which we believe was a simple oversight.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this bill. Please feel free to call Ted Diers at 271-7940 or me at 271-2958 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,


Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Senators Watters, Stiles, and Fuller Clark
Representatives Kahn, Reilly, and Spang