



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

January 12, 2016

The Honorable Nancy Stiles, Chairman
Senate Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 103
Concord, NH 03301

Re: Senate Bill 364 – establishing a complete streets study committee

Dear Chairman Stiles and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) regarding Senate Bill 364 that would establish a committee to study the feasibility of incorporating complete streets into the 10-year transportation improvement plan. NHDES supports this bill.

Motor vehicles account for approximately one-half of the emissions of air pollutants that cause the formation of ground level ozone and over one-third of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. Ground level ozone is a respiratory irritant that can cause severe health impacts to the sick, the very young, the elderly, and those with chronic respiratory conditions such as asthma. Greenhouse gases contribute to climate change, which is causing more frequent and more extreme weather events that have led to loss of life and significant damage to statewide infrastructure, particularly our roads and bridges.

The 2009 New Hampshire Climate Action Plan¹ called for a balanced, integrated, multi-modal transportation system that supports all modes of transportation including vehicles, public transportation options, pedestrians and bicycles. While the moniker "complete streets" was not used in the Action Plan, this is exactly what is meant by the term. When a transportation corridor enables safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation, the use of motor vehicles that emit environmentally damaging compounds can be, and is, reduced.

The concept of "complete streets" recognizes that each street is unique and there is no singular design that can or should be applied across the state. A committee that seeks how best to assist communities to develop and transform themselves using complete street principles will make our communities more attractive to businesses and people, and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists, resulting in benefits to all residents.

¹ http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/air/tsb/tps/climate/action_plan/nh_climate_action_plan.htm

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment in support of SB 364. Should you have further questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Craig Wright, Director, Air Resources Division (271-1088, craig.wright@des.nh.gov), or Rebecca Ohler, Administrator, Technical Services Bureau (271-6749, Rebecca.ohler@des.nh.gov).

Sincerely,



Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of SB364: Sens. Birdsell, Stiles, Feltes, Carson, Watters, Forrester; Reps. O'Connor, Byron, Suzanne Smith, Grenier, Steven Smith