



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Clark B. Freise, Assistant Commissioner

January 31, 2017

The Honorable Gary Daniels
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
State House, Room 103
Concord, NH 03301

Re: Senate Bill 100 – AN ACT making a general fund appropriation for continuation of the project development phase of the New Hampshire capital rail corridor project.

Dear Chairman Daniels 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 100 which would make an appropriation for the New Hampshire capital rail corridor project. NHDES takes no position on the proposed appropriation, but offers information relative to the benefits of rail in New Hampshire.

The New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority was established in 2007¹ to encourage and oversee the redevelopment of passenger rail services throughout New Hampshire, with an initial emphasis on the New Hampshire Capital Corridor project to connect communities from Concord south to major employers in Massachusetts. Motor vehicles travel approximately 40 million miles on New Hampshire roadways every day, and are the largest source of air pollution in the state, contributing to local and regional ground level ozone (smog) and other pollutants. Increased use of passenger rail by New Hampshire commuters would result in air quality benefits throughout the state. In concert with evaluation of passenger rail comes the added benefit of gaining the information necessary to improve the movement of freight by rail as well, thus offering our businesses a lower cost, and lower emission, form of freight movement versus on-road trucks.

A multi-modal approach to transportation is more effective at reducing single-occupant vehicle travel and thereby reducing congestion. In New Hampshire, the success of Amtrak's Downeaster service on the Seacoast, in conjunction with expanded bus service, has shown that a multi-modal approach is complementary and synergistic, resulting in greater ridership on both services. The recommendations of the New Hampshire State Rail Plan² support development of a multi-modal transportation approach, including implementation of the recommendations of the New Hampshire Capital Corridor Study for passenger rail service.

¹ Revised Statutes Annotated Chapter 238-A

² New Hampshire State Rail Plan, 2012 - <https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/aerorailtransit/railandtransit/rail-plan.htm>

www.des.nh.gov

29 Hazen Drive • PO Box 95 • Concord, NH 03302-0095
(603) 271-3503 • TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on SB 100. If you have any questions or require further information, please contact either Craig A. 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,



Clark B. Freise

Assistant Commissioner

cc: SB 100 sponsors: Senators Lasky, Soucy, Woodburn, Representatives M. MacKay, LeBrun, O'Brien, Jack, Rosenwald