



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Clark B. Freise, Assistant Commissioner

January 31, 2017

The Honorable Kevin Avard
Chair, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
State House, Room 100
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 117-FN – “An Act establishing the stormwater management and flood resilience fund within the department of environmental services”

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 117-FN, which would establish a stormwater management and flood resilience fund within the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). NHDES supports the concept of establishing this fund.

This bill addresses two major issues facing New Hampshire communities: managing stormwater and reducing the risk posed by extreme storm events. As communities become more densely developed, their total paved area increases and management of precipitation that falls on those paved areas becomes more challenging.

Stormwater management includes both flood control and water quality control. Although New Hampshire’s surface water is generally of good quality, where surface water quality is poor approximately 90% of the problems result from stormwater. Contaminated stormwater is often responsible for beach advisories, algal blooms, and murky river water.

Stormwater management for water quality control has become an increasingly urgent matter for the forty-four New Hampshire municipalities that are subject to the EPA’s municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permits. These permits will require the communities, which are mostly located in the southern tier of the state, to expend additional resources on stormwater management and monitoring.

The other major issue is vulnerability to extreme storms. In 2013, the Legislature created the New Hampshire Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission (Commission) to consider key scientific research on current and future coastal risks and hazards and to recommend legislation, rules, and other actions to address these risks. The Commission

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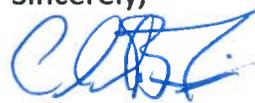
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created a Scientific Advisory Panel (Panel) to review available scientific information about coastal hazards and flood risks in New Hampshire. Based on an analysis of the latest published data on historic trends, the Panel recommended that buildings and infrastructure with a life expectancy beyond 2050 should be designed to manage a 15% increase in the amount of precipitation in extreme precipitation events. The Commission's diverse membership, including seventeen municipal representatives, NHDES and other state agency officials, and insurance and realtor representatives, developed and unanimously approved a final report with a suite of recommendations, one of which is the activity proposed in SB 117-FN.

Establishing a stormwater management and flood resilience fund would be a first step in assisting municipalities to protect their residents by improving stormwater infrastructure and addressing the risks from extreme precipitation events. It is important to recognize that both stormwater management and flood resilience are long term challenges and will require additional funding over that longer term. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on SB117-FN. If you have further questions or need additional information, please contact Ted Diers (ted.diers@des.nh.gov, 271-3289) or Steve Couture (steven.couture@des.nh.gov, 271-8801).

Sincerely,



Clark B. Freise
Assistant Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of SB 117 -FN: Sen. Watters; Reps. Spang, Farnham, Grassie