



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

April 18, 2018

The Honorable Sharon Carson
Chair, Executive Departments and Administration Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 101
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 1254, AN ACT establishing a committee to study the procedures for adoption of national codes by the state of New Hampshire

Dear Chair Carson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1254. The bill establishes a committee to study the procedures for adoption of national codes by the State of New Hampshire, including the codes related to life-safety and the state building energy code. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) has no position on this bill but stands ready to support such a committee if convened. We offer the following to assist you in your deliberations.

The state building energy code, defined in RSA 155-A:1, is intended to ensure that New Hampshire homes and businesses meet a minimum level of energy efficiency. New Hampshire homes and businesses need to be safe and comfortable spaces across a wide variety of weather conditions. Constructing energy-efficient buildings is the most cost effective means to achieve this outcome. Energy-efficiency measures also have a direct, positive impact on public health and the quality of our natural environment as reducing energy demand leads to lower air pollution emissions.

Adoption of national codes is currently the purview of the NH Building Code Review Board (BCRB). The BCRB is a statutory body that the legislature created in 2002 under RSA 155-A:10. NHDES has followed the work of the BCRB during their review and adoption of the 2015 family of building codes. The Board is made up of 17 members representing contractors, building trades, architects, fire officials, and code enforcement officers; each nominated by their respective community and an expert in their field. The Board is charged with the adoption of updates or changes to the state building code, which the legislature must ratify within 2 years. The Board was formed to ensure that changes to the statewide building code are made only after a thorough and expert review of potential new codes has been completed. NHDES provided testimony to the BCRB during their deliberations regarding whether to adopt the 2015 family of codes. During 2016 and 2017, NHDES also attended legislative hearings on the adopted 2015 codes and observed the BCRB chair and members make themselves available to answer

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questions on the scope of the building code changes and the costs. If HB 1254 is passed, NHDES looks forward to sharing our thoughts on the procedures for adopting new codes. Adoption of modern energy codes and standards will not only provide cost savings for heating, cooling, and lighting for homeowners, but it will help keep New Hampshire economically competitive. Increasing the adoption of energy efficiency within homes and businesses has the potential to displace out-of-region sources of fossil fuel energy and, in doing so, keeping previously "exported" energy dollars circulating in the New Hampshire and regional economy leading to increased economic development.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 1254. If you have any questions or require further information, please contact either Chris Skoglund, Climate and Energy Program Manager, (Christopher.Skoglund@des.nh.gov, 271-7624) or Rebecca Ohler, Administrator, Technical Services Bureau (Rebecca.Ohler@des.nh.gov, 271-6749).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert R. Scott", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert R. Scott

Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of HB 1254: Representatives Beaudoin, P. Schmidt, Roberts; Senator Carson