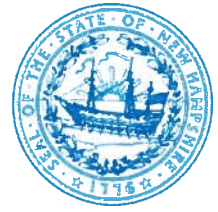




The State of New Hampshire  
**Department of Environmental Services**



**Robert R. Scott, Commissioner**

May 3, 2019

The Honorable Kevin Cavanaugh  
Chair, Senate Commerce Committee  
State House, Room 100  
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: HB 558 - An Act restricting the distribution of plastic straws.**

Dear Chair Cavanaugh and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 558. This bill would prohibit the distribution of single-use plastic straws by food service businesses unless explicitly requested by the customer. Though not taking a position on the bill, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) supports the concept of reducing the distribution of single-use items to reduce the quantity of waste disposed of in New Hampshire.

For the record, when requested by the LBA to provide information to prepare a fiscal note for the bill, NHDES determined that the resources it might need to robustly implement the responsibilities associated with this bill – including education and outreach to the business community and consumers prior to and during implementation of the prohibition, and potential enforcement when voluntary compliance might fail – would require having to hire part time help. However, upon reflection and in light of what appears to be a gathering public concern for reducing plastic pollution, the agency believes a high degree of voluntary compliance might be realized without having to hire additional staff. In light of this, the cost figures represented on the fiscal note are probably overstated.

Also for the record, NHDES notes that the language in the first paragraph, on lines 3 to 4: “to be used by the department of environmental services” seems to imply that the waste management hierarchy established by RSA 149-M:3 is to be used exclusively by the Department of Environmental Services. However, the hierarchy is not strictly for use by NHDES; i.e., the general court established the hierarchy to provide a standard of preference for integrated solid waste management across the entire state of New Hampshire. If the statement were revised to instead read: “to be used in the state of New Hampshire,” it would help reinforce the relevancy of the hierarchy statewide.

As stated previously, NHDES does not take a position on the bill, but does support efforts to reduce the quantity of single-use plastic straws being generated in New Hampshire, as well as raise public awareness about the adverse impacts of plastic waste in general and the benefits of reducing what we produce for plastic waste.

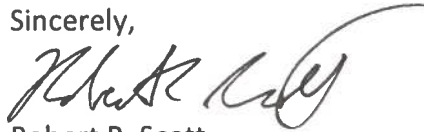
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The Honorable Kevin Cavanaugh  
Chair, Senate Commerce Committee  
May 3, 2019  
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Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 558. Should you have further questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact either: Melissa Zych, Pollution Prevention Program, [melissa.zych@des.nh.gov](mailto:melissa.zych@des.nh.gov), 271-6398 or Michael Nork [michael.nork@des.nh.gov](mailto:michael.nork@des.nh.gov), Waste Management Program, 271-2936.

Sincerely,

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

Robert R. Scott  
Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of HB 558: Representatives Spang, Balch, Luneau, Myler; Senators Fuller Clark, Watters