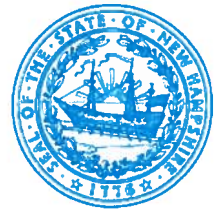




The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

January 29, 2019

The Honorable Amanda Gourgue
Chair, House Environment and Agriculture Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 303
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 617, AN ACT Establishing a Committee to Study Recycling Streams in New Hampshire

Dear Chair Gourgue and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 617. This bill would establish a committee to study the challenges currently facing recycling programs in New Hampshire. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) supports this bill.

Recent changes in the global recycling market since 2017 have affected recycling programs in cities and towns across the country. In some cases, these market conditions have made it difficult for New Hampshire municipalities to find viable recycling outlets for certain materials, such as mixed paper or glass. At the same time, many municipalities have seen drastic cost increases related to management of recyclables. Although NHDES does not actively track recycling markets, we are anecdotally aware that some municipalities are currently paying more per ton to recycle than what it costs them to send trash to a landfill. This is concerning because it creates an economic disincentive for communities to continue recycling. In fact, media reporting has revealed that because of rising costs, some towns have decided to stop recycling certain items or temporarily discontinue curbside recycling services, ultimately making it more difficult for residents to divert recyclables from disposal.

A joint committee established by HB 617 would provide an opportunity for further exploration of these developments and what might be done to make recycling systems in New Hampshire more resilient over the long term. NHDES fully supports this initiative, and should a committee be formed, we would be pleased to assist its efforts as deemed appropriate.

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The Honorable Amanda Gourgue
Chair, House Environment and Agriculture Committee
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Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 617. Should you have further questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact either Michael Nork, Environmental Analyst (Michael.nork@des.nh.gov, 271-2936) or Todd Moore, Solid Waste Management Bureau Administrator (Todd.Moore@des.nh.gov, 271-6467).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert R. Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert R. Scott
Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of HB 617: Representatives Ebel, Turcotte, Carson, Tucker, O'Conner, Malloy; Senators Ward, Watters, Fuller Clark