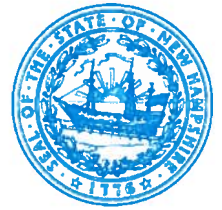




The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

February 6, 2019

The Honorable Suzanne Smith
Chair, House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 625-FN, relative to an aquatic invasive species decal for boats

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 625-FN. This bill seeks to create an aquatic invasive species decal for the powerboats registered in states other than New Hampshire. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) supports the intent of this bill.

The primary vector for the spread of aquatic invasive species is transient boaters. There are currently upwards of 100,000 registered boats in the state of New Hampshire, and an indeterminate number of transient out-of-state boaters who cross borders and visit New Hampshire waterbodies during the boating season. State efforts have long been underway to educate boaters who are registered in New Hampshire, with messages included in boat registration renewals, boater safety classes, boater guides and other educational materials. Without being able to identify the pool of transient boaters who are registered elsewhere, it is highly challenging to educate them about invasives, and even harder to ask them to pay their fair share in the costs of prevention and management of these species.

The revenues derived from this bill would allow for expanded program capacity for additional prevention activities to slow the rate of invasive species spread, expanded control projects, work on currently unmanaged infestations, and rapid-response capacity. These funds would flow through the existing Exotic Species Program at NHDES. There are two issues that should be addressed by the committee. First, given the limited capacity for managing a new registration program, we anticipate contracting with a vendor to develop a platform for acquiring the decal. The state of Maine conducts a similar program in this way and the bill should expressly allow for a contractual arrangement. The second issue is to define where any fine revenue should go; we suggest Marine Patrol or the state treasurer.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 625-FN. Should you have questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact Amy Smagula, Exotic Species Program Coordinator, at 603-271-2248 or Amy.Smagula@des.nh.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Scott
Commissioner

cc: Sponsor of HB 625-FN: Representative S. Smith