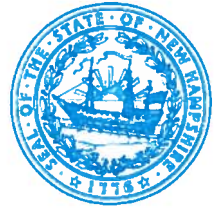




The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

March 14, 2019

The Honorable Susan Almy
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 202
Concord, NH 03301

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

Dear Chair Almy 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.

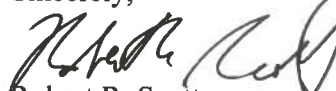
The primary vector for the spread of aquatic invasive species is transient boaters. There are currently upwards of 94,000 registered boats in the state of New Hampshire, and an indeterminate number of transient out-of-state boaters who cross borders and visit New Hampshire waterbodies during the boating season. New Hampshire's freshwater resources attract boaters not only from New Hampshire, but the region as a whole and beyond. While these boaters provide a good revenue stream for the state, they also present a risk for aesthetic, ecological and economic impacts from aquatic invasive species infestations.

Current program funding is \$893,000 per year provided through a \$9.50 fee on boat registrations. At least half of that is granted out to communities for prevention, research and control grants each year. Despite this, there is a shortfall in funds available to manage aquatic invasive species in the state. For example, control costs alone exceeded \$1.4 million in 2018 for just one-third of the infested waterbodies in New Hampshire with state funds only able to cover about one-quarter of those costs, forcing local entities like municipalities and non-profits to shoulder the majority of the costs.

Exact revenue estimates from this bill are indeterminate at this time because we do not have an accurate count of boaters visiting New Hampshire who are registered elsewhere. Nonetheless, any revenues derived from this bill would allow for expanded program capacity for additional prevention activities to slow the rate of invasive species spread, expand control projects, work on currently un-managed infestations, and build rapid-response capacity. These funds would flow through the existing Exotic Species Program at NHDES, and a vendor would be established to handle the sticker purchase transaction, for a fee of about \$3 per transaction, yielding a net income of \$17 per decal sold.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 625-FN-A. 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