



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

January 12, 2022

The Honorable Andrew Renzullo
Chairman, House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1066 – AN ACT establishing a commission to investigate and analyze the environmental and human and animal health impacts relating to cyanobacteria blooms in New Hampshire waterbodies.

Dear Chairman Renzullo and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1066. This bill proposes to form a legislative commission to examine issues related to occurrence of cyanobacteria in New Hampshire surface waters. NHDES supports this bill as written.

Cyanobacteria are a type of plankton that occur in most New Hampshire surface waters. Under certain conditions these plankton become dominant and may cause unsightly scums on the surface of the water and create conditions that are unsafe for drinking water, recreation, and agricultural water usage. Cyanobacteria produce natural toxins or “cyanotoxins” that present health risks to humans, livestock, and pets. Over the past several years, high levels of cyanobacteria have forced NHDES to issue advisories on approximately 30 water bodies annually and has led to the cumulative loss of approximately 600 days of recreational use each year. Cyanotoxins are not yet regulated either on the federal or state level in New Hampshire, but are of concern for affected water supplies. Although some cyanobacteria blooms in New Hampshire have produced concerning levels of cyanotoxins in untreated water, there is currently no indication that harmful levels of cyanotoxins are finding their way into public drinking water.

The commission, as proposed, addresses several of the challenging issues cyanobacteria can present in the state’s waterbodies, including bloom identification and severity, communication to the public, factors that cause blooms, and actions that can be taken to minimize risks.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 1066. Should you have questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact Dave Neils, Limnology Center Director, at 603-271-8865 or david.neils@des.nh.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Scott
Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of HB 1066: Representative Rung; Senator Prentiss