



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



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

April 11, 2022

The Honorable Kevin Avard
Chairman, Energy & Natural Resources Committee
NH State House, Room 103
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1134, AN ACT establishing a commission to study proper labeling and disposal of disposable wipes

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 1134. HB 1134 proposes to establish a commission to study proper labeling and disposal of disposable wipes. Municipal wastewater systems and onsite septic systems are central to public health and safety in the State of New Hampshire. Issues associated with improper disposal of wipe products have negatively impacted wastewater systems and septic systems in the State. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) supports this bill.

Residents and businesses in the State of New Hampshire are reliant upon municipal wastewater systems and onsite septic systems for proper sanitary waste processing, for protection of public health and safety, and for protection of the environment. These systems rely on a pipe network and/or a series of pumps to transfer wastewater for proper treatment. These systems are designed to effectively handle human biological waste and toilet paper. When other products enter the waste stream, they contribute to significant clogging of the pipes and damage to pumps and equipment. There are numerous instances in New Hampshire, and countless instances nationwide, where wipes not intended for down-the-drain disposal were flushed, leading to clogs, sewage overflows and equipment failure. The sewer overflows and septic backups resulting from wipe-related impairments create unsanitary conditions, health risks to property owners, employees and the public. The resulting situations cause business interruptions, expensive cleanup costs and property damage. The labor required in response to these situations, as well as the damage to equipment, lead to increased costs for sewer and system users.

NHDES agrees that assessing the impact to public wastewater infrastructure resulting from improper disposal of wipes is a timely action given the challenges faced by NH wastewater utilities. Further, we

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agree that a commission to study ways to encourage the proper disposal of wipe products would be a very positive step toward addressing these increasingly problematic issues.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this legislation. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Wade Pelham, with the NHDES Wastewater Engineering Bureau at (603) 271-2818 or wade.pelham@des.nh.gov.

Sincerely,

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

Robert R. Scott
Commissioner

cc: NH Representatives Buco, Thompson, Smith; NH Senator Sherman