



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



**Robert R. Scott, Commissioner**

April 11, 2022

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

**RE: HB 1168 Amendment to increase Safetank reimbursement from \$2,250 to \$3,300.**

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the subject proposed amendment to HB 1168. This amendment would increase the reimbursement limit for the upgrade of home heating oil tanks for low-income homeowners from \$2,250 to \$3,300. RSA 146-D establishes the Oil Discharge and Disposal Cleanup Fund to provide financial resources for the prevention and cleanup of oil discharges.

RSA 146-D:6, III establishes the "Safetank" program to provide financial assistance to eligible low-income homeowners for the replacement of substandard heating oil tanks that pose a risk of release. The current \$2,250 ceiling was established in 2017, and no longer covers the typical cost for the replacement of a home heating oil tank. The average project cost is now approximately \$3,300, and recent time and materials invoices submitted by contractors have ranged as high as \$4,000. The resulting balance owed by the homeowner is often more than they can afford and may preclude them from upgrading a high-risk tank. Further, in some regions of the state it is becoming difficult for low-income homeowners to find contractors who are willing to do tank upgrades under the program. By adjusting the reimbursable limit to more closely reflect current market rates, HB 1168 will ensure that the Safetank program remains viable and continues preventing heating oil releases.

In summary, NHDES supports this amendment to HB 1168 because it makes a needed adjustment to the reimbursement rate for a critical spill prevention program. Passage of the bill will help to ensure that the Oil Discharge and Disposal Cleanup Fund continues to provide vital support for the protection of New Hampshire's groundwater and drinking water.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment to HB 1168. Should you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact either Jennifer Marts, Supervisor Fund Management Section ([Jennifer.A.Marts@des.nh.gov](mailto:Jennifer.A.Marts@des.nh.gov), 271-2570) or Michael Wimsatt, Director of the Waste Management Division ([Michael.Wimsatt@des.nh.gov](mailto:Michael.Wimsatt@des.nh.gov), 271-2905).

Sincerely,

Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

ec: Sponsors of HB 1168: Representatives Bixby and Homola