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Frederick J. McNeill

Municipal Officer

Allan G. Palmer

Business & Industry
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Advisory Committees

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NH Office of
Strategic Initiatives

Mark Hemmerlein

NH Department of
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John Magee

NH Fish & Game
Department

Gail McWilliam Jellie

NH Department of
Agriculture,
Markets & Food

Vacant

NH Department of
Natural and Cultural
Resources

Staff:

Tracie Sales

Program Manager

Jen Drociak

Watershed Coordinator

Mariah Mitchell

Program Assistant

N.H. Rivers Management and Protection Program

N.H. Rivers Management Advisory Committee

February 13, 2019

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

RE: HB 326 *relative to the definition of a prime wetland.*

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its support for House Bill 326, which further defines prime wetland for local protection in fill and dredge permits.

The proposed expanded definition of prime wetland would allow municipalities to include narrower portions, or “fingers” of wetlands in their designation. These narrower portions could be fringe wetlands, low-gradient feeder stream systems, or connectors between two larger wetland systems and provide significant habitat for macroinvertebrate, fish, birds, and wildlife. As such, these narrower portions can provide a significant contribution to the wetland functions and values of the prime wetland. The RMAC believes the current exclusion of these narrower portions is arbitrary and not based upon science. Thus, the RMAC supports HB 326 to allow these narrower portions to be included as prime wetlands.

The RMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to administer RSA 483, the Rivers Management and Protection Program. The Governor and Council appointed Committee is comprised of members from business, agriculture, hydroelectric, municipal government, water supply, conservation, recreation, fish and game, and historical interests. Among its other responsibilities, the RMAC is charged with reviewing legislation relevant to the Program and with advising the NHDES Commissioner on the merits of such legislation.

In conclusion, the RMAC supports HB 326 relative to the definition of a prime wetland because it would include sensitive narrower portions of these wetlands which can be as significant as the larger wetland itself in their functions and values.

The Honorable Suzanne Smith
Chair, House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
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Should you have any questions regarding our testimony, please feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or MLT@naturesource.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michele L. Tremblay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michele" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Tremblay".

Michele L. Tremblay
RMAC Chair

cc: Rep. Chuck Grassie
Rep. Joshua Adjutant
RMAC Representatives
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES
Rene Pelletier, Assistant Director, Water Division, NHDES
Ted Diers, Administrator, Watershed Mgmt. Bur., NHDES
Tracie Sales, Rivers and Lakes Programs Manager, NHDES
Local River Management Advisory Committee Chairs