



April 4, 2011

The Honorable Peter Bragdon
 Office of the Senate President
 State House
 107 North Main Street
 Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Dear Mr. Senate President:

Budget reductions proposed in House Bill 1 will cut deeply into the operations of New Hampshire's natural resource agencies. These cuts threaten several long-standing conservation programs with demonstrated track records of on-the-ground success supporting our economy as well as protecting the health and safety of our communities and citizens. Cuts beyond those in the Governor's proposed budget will have significant negative impacts on clean water, wildlife conservation, hunting and fishing access, working forests and farmland, and outdoor recreation across the Granite State, with accompanying harm to the economic sectors that depend on these attributes.

At stake is nothing less than the longstanding bi-partisan commitment in New Hampshire to ensuring we have a clean, safe and beautiful environment to pass on to future generations. This is not only important to the health of our citizens, but to the state's quality of life and the long-term sustainability of our economy. Reneging on this commitment undermines not only our economy and way of life, but the expectation that New Hampshire citizens have of our elected officials to uphold these shared values and traditions.

We recognize that the preparation of the state budget requires you to balance many competing needs, and that conservation spending should shoulder a fair share of the budget reductions needed in these challenging economic times. However, drastic reduction or elimination of conservation programs undermines the foundations of sustainable economic development and threatens the health of our land, water, and people.

In specific, we urge the Senate to undo the drastic cuts made by the House in the following areas:

- The proposed elimination of the **Well Water Program** would result in no consumer protection, and more contamination, of drinking water supplies for thousands of New Hampshire homeowners and businesses.
- Drastic reductions in **Limnology Center Programs** would result in the state no longer monitoring the water quality of beaches, public pools and in the lakes, rivers and streams. This cut raises the risk of human illness, loss of tourism, and the downshifting of costs to municipalities.

- Dismantling of the **Land and Community Heritage Investment Program** through the sweeping of its dedicated fund into the state's general fund.
- The elimination of both the **Lakes and Rivers Management Programs** would severely undermine the state's ability to protect these natural assets important to our drinking water supplies, recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat.
- The state's three **volunteer water quality monitoring programs** are also slated for elimination. These programs take advantage of hundreds of citizen volunteers who are trained to collect water samples and pay for them to be analyzed. The resulting data guides the state and municipal health officers with their management, and identifies areas that require pollution control and restoration.
- Elimination of the **shellfish program** would lead to the closure of all commercial and recreational shellfish harvesting in the state.
- Elimination of the **radon program** would mean homeowners, landlords, businesses and schools would no longer be able to obtain information or assistance in addressing radon contamination. Radon in indoor air is the second leading cause of lung cancer in New Hampshire.

These important programs leverage millions of dollars to protect some of the state's most important economic assets: forests for fiber and wood products, drinking water for communities, opportunities for public recreation and hunting, and estuaries for fisheries. Most important, the budget passed by the House would severely erode the ability of the Department of Environmental Services to protect the state's water quality - including our drinking water.

We respectfully ask that the Senate look closely at the programs targeted for elimination in the House-passed budget, and ensure that the current need to reduce state spending doesn't trump the long-term importance of having a clean, safe water supply for New Hampshire citizens, businesses, and visitors.

Our organizations stand ready to work in partnership with the State of New Hampshire to help find the balance needed between reducing government spending and protecting the health, safety, and economic contribution of New Hampshire's natural resources.

Sincerely,

Will Abbott
Society for the Protection of NH Forests

Carol Andrews
NH Association of Conservation Commissions

Susan Arnold
Appalachian Mountain Club

Michael J. Bartlett
NH Audubon

Rebecca Brown
Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust

Joel Harrington
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Tom Irwin
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Rodger Krussman
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Rachel Rouillard
Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership

Max Stamp
Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee

Jared Teutsch
New Hampshire Lakes Association

Michele L. Tremblay
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