



Members dedicated to protecting lakes

January 19, 2012

The Honorable Stephen Stepanek, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 202
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1222 relative to Application Fees for Permits Required Under RSA 483-B

Dear Chair Stepanek and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on HB 1222 relative to application fees for permits required under RSA 483-B: Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (SWQPA). The New Hampshire Lakes Association (NH LAKES) represents over 1400 individual and family members, and 150 associations and private businesses, on whose behalf we respectfully do not support HB 1222. If passed it would reduce the effectiveness of the SWQPA, a review and permitting provision that is essential to maintaining water quality in our lakes and ponds, water resources that are vital to the New Hampshire economy and to the beauty and health of this state. We believe that the current fees are reasonable and simply cover the cost of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' (DES) timely and efficient implementation of this program.

NH LAKES has not gotten any feedback about the costs of shoreland permitting. However, the most prevalent feedback that we do get is that the program needs to work effectively; to permit appropriate uses; be respectful of private property rights; be efficient and timely in its responsiveness; and most importantly to safeguard water quality. For the program to achieve all these intended outcomes it must be sufficiently funded, and appropriately be supported by the applicants intending to do shoreland work. Our observation is that DES is dedicated to providing the best service that it can to the public and are limited only by the resources and staffing that it can apply to providing those services. We work closely with that agency and see no signs of excess but instead regularly observe people going to great lengths to do good work in spite of shrinking budgets. The passage of HB 1222 will further reducing the resources that this agency depends on to implement this essential water quality protection program and would in our view have a direct negative impact on their ability to provide timely and thorough services to a public that expects and deserves the best possible professional response.

We ask that you vote HB 1222 inexpedient to legislate, allowing the current SWQPA fees to remain in effect and thank you again for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom O'Brien, President
New Hampshire Lakes Association