The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

March 20, 2009

The Honorable Susan Almy, Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 202
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 205-FN, relative to certain boating fees

Dear Chairman Almy:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 205, which would increase boating registration and license fees to be allocated to the Department of Safety and increase the allocation of boat registration fee funds to the Department of Environmental Services (DES), Lake Restoration and Preservation Fund. An additional $2.50 per boat registration would be provided to DES to strengthen our ability to control exotic aquatic weeds in New Hampshire's surface water bodies. DES supports this legislation.

DES currently receives $5.00 per boat registration to fund the Exotic Species and Clean Lakes Programs. In accordance with RSA 487:25, I, $1.50 is allocated for the control of exotic aquatic weeds, $3.00 for the milfoil and other exotic aquatic plants prevention program, and $0.50 for lake restoration and preservation measures. The actual number of boat registrations varies from year to year, but is typically around 100,000 boats. Therefore, the total annual revenues provided to DES from boat registration fees are typically around $500,000. HB 205 proposes to increase the annual revenues dedicated to the control of exotic aquatic weeds by $250,000, by increasing this portion of the fee by $2.50. The additional revenues would be divided between control ($150,000) and prevention and research grants ($100,000).

For at least 5 years, significantly more applications for exotic aquatic weed control projects, especially for milfoil, have been received by DES than could be funded. For example, for State Fiscal Year 2009, DES has a total of $60,000 available for exotic aquatic weed control fund project grants as compared with 30 applications with a total estimated cost of $400,000. Consequently, DES will only be able to fund thirteen of a possible thirty exotic aquatic plant control projects, and the ones funded will be at 30% of total project costs, rather than the traditional 50%, to support more projects. Therefore, the extra $150,000 per year that could be provided by the proposed fee increase would serve to substantially expand the coverage of this program in future years. It will also enable us to implement better, more integrated approaches for many infested water bodies. The additional $100,000 for prevention and research grants would allow for expanded coverage of beneficial programs to monitor public access sites to prevent new infestations of exotic aquatic plants.

In conclusion, the proposed increase in funding for the exotic aquatic species program proposed by HB 205 will expand the state's ability to control and prevent exotic aquatic species in New Hampshire and enhance the protection of the health and integrity of our waterbodies for future generations. At your request, we would be happy to provide you with a detailed

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presentation on the extent of the exotic aquatic weed problem in New Hampshire and the long term control strategies that these additional resources would support.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment in support of this important legislation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call Jody Connor at 271-3414 or me at 271-3449.

Sincerely,

Michael Walls, Ass't. Comm.
for Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Representative Richard Drisko