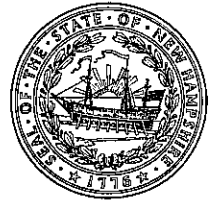




The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

April 30, 2009

The Honorable Robert J. Letourneau, Chairman
Senate Transportation and Interstate Cooperation Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 101-B
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RE: House Bill 515, an act establishing a commission to study alternate fuel vehicles

Dear Chairman Letourneau and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) regarding HB 515 relative to establishing a commission to study alternative fuel vehicles. DES supports the formation of this commission to study the impact to the highway fund from today's evolving vehicle mix that includes electric, hybrid, and alternative fuel cars. DES further supports the amendment proposed by Senator Fuller Clark adding DES to the commission. It is necessary to begin a discussion regarding shortfalls in the State's highway fund resulting from reduced fuel consumption due to high fuel prices, as well as any inequities posed by alternative fuel and efficient vehicles.

Motor vehicles are the major source of air pollutants that cause elevated levels of ground level ozone in New Hampshire, contributing over half of the nitrogen oxide and volatile organic compound pollutants that form ozone pollution. Motor vehicles also account for about one third of New Hampshire's carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Due to the health impacts to our citizens from high levels of ozone and the potential negative health and environmental impacts of increasing CO₂ levels, it is in the best interest of the state to promote the use of cleaner, more efficient advanced technology and alternative fuel vehicles that reduce emissions of ozone-forming pollutants and greenhouse gases.

All vehicles traveling on the roadways contribute to the wear and tear of our transportation network. Ultra efficient hybrid vehicles, ultra clean natural gas vehicles, and emerging technology vehicles just coming into the market reduce the impact on our air quality, but do not have a lower impact on the roads themselves. Some mechanism should be developed to allow for equitable accounting of a vehicle's impact on the roads of the state. Furthermore, through the recently released Climate Change Action Plan, Governor Lynch's 25x25 Initiative, and other programs, the State has firmly established the goal of reducing overall vehicle miles traveled to meet both energy and environmental goals. It will be necessary to address the long term impacts of emerging technology vehicles, as well as these policies, on the highway fund.

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DES has worked extensively to promote the use of advanced technology and alternative fuel vehicles through the Granite State Clean Cities Coalition, a public/private partnership of over 70 stakeholders statewide. We have also consistently supported actions that reduce the total number of vehicle miles traveled in the state through participation in regional planning commissions, metropolitan planning organizations, and the Governor's climate and renewable energy programs mentioned above. DES, therefore, can provide a valuable perspective to the work of this commission and looks forward to participating in this commission.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 515. Please call me at 271-3503 or Rebecca Ohler, Supervisor of the Mobile Source Section, at 271-6749 if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,



Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Representative George Katsakiores
Senator Martha Fuller Clark