

N.H. Lakes Management Advisory Committee

[N.H. Lakes Management and Protection Program](https://www.lmac.des.nh.gov/)

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April 4, 2023

The Honorable Denise Ricciardi, Chair
Senate Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 101
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 137 - AN ACT relative to boating safety equipment rules and vessel numbering rules, and establishing a committee to study boat registration fees.

Dear Chair Ricciardi and Members of the Committee:

The Lakes Management Advisory Committee (LMAC) is writing to express its **support of House Bill 137**, which establishes a committee to study boat registration fees.

At the time of boat registration, New Hampshire currently collects \$17.50 in additional fees. These fees are used for search and rescue, public boat access, coastal pier maintenance, and the lake restoration fund. The lake restoration fund is the sole source of funding for the state's program to prevent and manage aquatic invasive species, which includes providing grants to non-profit organizations and municipalities for work to address aquatic invasive species.

Aquatic invasive species spread rapidly if left untreated. Their dense populations hinder boat navigation, negatively affect recreational enjoyment, and harm populations of native species. Since aquatic invasive species are easily transported from waterbody to another when boats are used in multiple places, the current fee structure ties the funding source to a community that benefits from clean waterways and whose actions are most likely to inadvertently cause the spread of aquatic invasive species. Having a reliable, dedicated source of funding that is adequate to combat aquatic invasive species is critical to the public's continued enjoyment of New Hampshire lakes, including the associated economic benefits.

Stakeholders recently became aware that collecting these fees as part of boat registration is out of compliance with U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Without a change, Marine Patrol stands to lose as much as half of its annual funding. This is an issue facing multiple states. Other states have seen revenues drop significantly when they have separated their boat registration fee from fees used to support boat-related programs like safety, access, and aquatic invasive species work. A better solution is needed in order to protect these essential programs in New Hampshire.

Establishing a committee is an appropriate way to explore remedies that would be acceptable to all affected stakeholders, as well as allowing time for stakeholders across states to work with the federal government to see if the issue can be resolved at the national level. Consequently, the LMAC supports the study committee created in HB 137.

LMAC VOTING MEMBERS: Jared Maraio, Chair, NH Travel Council • Shane Bradt, Scientific Community • Ryan Cardella, Marine Trades Association • Tiffany Grade, Conservation Community • Sara Holland, NH Association of Realtors • Janet Kidder, Planning Boards • Frank Lemay, NH Business & Industry Assoc. • Andrea LaMoreaux, NH LAKES • Lisa Morin, State Conservation Committee • Susan Price, NH Fish & Game Commission • Dick Smith, Fishing Interests • Meredith Smith, Municipal Official • Steve Wingate, Conservation Commissions

LMAC NON-VOTING MEMBERS: Garret Graaskamp, Vice Chair, NH Fish & Game Dept. • Capt. Tim Dunleavy, NH Dept. of Safety • Eric Feldbaum, NH Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources • Jennifer Gilbert, NH Dept. of Business and Economic Affairs • Mark Hemmerlein, NH Dept. of Trans. • Shawn Jasper, NH Dept. of Ag, Markets & Food

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The LMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to administer RSA 483-A, the Lakes Management and Protection Program. The Governor and Council appointed Committee is comprised of 19 members representing academia, business, conservation organizations, lake associations, tourism, fish and game commission, marine trades, realtors, municipal government as well as several state agencies.

In conclusion, the LMAC supports HB 137 for the reasons stated above. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact me at (603) 366-5531 or Jared@cruisenh.com.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jared Maraio', written in a cursive style.

Jared Maraio, Chair

cc: Senators Avard, Fenton, and Ward
LMAC Representatives
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES