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NHACC April Legislative Update

1 message

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[Legislative Update April 2025](#)[View this email in your browser](#)

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions

Legislative Update

At NHACC, we work to make sure your voice is heard in Concord. We have a board legislative committee to review bills and make recommendations on upcoming legislation. We coordinate with partners working on similar issues. We testify in the legislature to ensure conservation commissions are represented. We are tracking several proposed bills that would affect water and wildlife.

Bills with upcoming public hearings

[Senate Bill 32](#) — Next hearing is on April 23rd at 10:20 am in Legislative Office Building 307. This bill, at the request of the Fish and Game Department, would allow an open forum for suggestions relating to Fish and Game to be publicized digitally, allows shooting of injured waterfowl from a boat, and allows the Fish and Game director to set the fisheries habitat fee.

[Senate Bill 235](#) — Next hearing is on April 23rd at 10:40 am in Legislative Office Building 307. This bill enables funds from the Pitman–Robertson Act to be spent by the Fish & Game Department on threatened and endangered species in New Hampshire. This opens the door for more funding sources for protecting threatened and endangered species. NHACC supports this

bill to enhance protection of NH endangered and threatened species. The Senate voted **Ought to Pass**. This bill is now in the House Fish and Game and Marine Resources Committee.

NHACC is Opposed to House Bill 639

[House Bill 639](#) will prohibit a municipality's ability to regulate blockchain and cryptocurrency facilities. NHACC is opposed to this bill and provided written [testimony](#) to the committee. The letter stated in, "Crypto mines can have significant impact on communities. They produce a loud buzzing sound 24 hours a day created by the fans used to cool the banks of computers. The mines are also energy-intensive and can use huge amounts of energy and stress local electric grids. Towns should have the right to decide when and where these facilities are located." The Committee of Commerce and Consumer Affairs voted **Ought to Pass** with [amendment](#). **This bill passed the House and** was introduced to the Senate Commerce Committee.

Bills impacting Wildlife

[House Bill 655](#) – Increased penalties for Fish & Game violations. This bill increases the fine for illegally killing or possessing wildlife including marten, moose, bear, deer, wild rabbit, hare, muskrat, gray squirrel, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, spruce grouse, pheasant, woodcock, duck, geese, fisher, bobcat, fox, otter, beaver, mink, & racoon, and ensures that the fine is mandatory. In addition, this bill establishes a third-offense violation of Fish & Game license suspension penalties as a Class A misdemeanor. NHACC supports this bill to protect wildlife. The Fish & Game and Marine Resources Committee voted Ought to Pass with [amendment](#). This bill was sent to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and was voted Ought to Pass.

[House Bill 573](#) - Using General funds (up to \$200K) and authorizing an additional \$1 fee for boat, OHRV, and snowmobile registration. The additional funds raised will be used to establish a search and rescue fund. The House voted **Inexpedient to Legislate**.

[House Bill 589](#) - Wanton waste/Killing Contests. A prohibition on wanton waste which is "the act of intentionally leaving a wounded or killed animal in the field or forest without making a reasonable effort to retrieve and render it for consumption or use." This bill also includes a prohibition on killing contests of species that are regulated by the Fish & Game Commission. NHACC supports this bill to reduce unnecessary animal suffering. The Fish & Game and Marine Resources Committee voted **Inexpedient to Legislate**.

Bills that have been killed/referred or retained

[Senate Bill 55](#) would have reduced the amount of money going into the Land Use Change Tax, which is how New Hampshire Conservation Committees receive funding. This bill provides temporary exemptions from the land use change tax for qualifying housing projects. NHACC is opposed to this bill and sent in written [testimony](#) to ask the committee to vote Inexpedient to Legislate on this bill. The Senate Commerce Committee voted **Inexpedient to Legislate**.

[House Bill 174](#) Increasing the maximum weight of a utility terrain vehicle to 3,500 pounds unladen dry weight. HB 174 applies to state property, which is about 200 miles of trail. However, it will impact every landowner whose property connects with state trails. This bill was voted **Inexpedient to Legislate by the House.**

[House Bill 246](#) Directing the state conservation committee to implement the conservation district climate resilience grant program and making an appropriation therefor. NHACC supports the creation of a state climate resilience grant program to help our farmers prepare for an unpredictable climate and wrote a letter of support. **This bill was retained in committee.**

[House Bill 332](#) Allowing for the establishment of a village district to protect and remediate surface waters. This bill helps to protect water quality by allowing multiple municipalities surrounding a lake to form a village district in an area around the lake to protect and restore lake health. The House killed this bill by voting **Inexpedient to Legislate (196–171).**

[House Bill 422](#) This bill proposes increasing the penalty that the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services *may levy* upon any person who violates the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act from \$5,000 to *up to* \$15,000 per violation. The House killed this bill by voting **Inexpedient to Legislate.**

[Senate Bill 231](#) will limit municipality regulations to no more than 50 feet past the setback line and road frontage for wetlands. NHACC is opposed to this bill and provided [testimony](#) at the public hearing on March 4th. “Conservation commissions play a key role in protecting the quality and integrity of their towns’ water resources, the NHACC Board supports towns right to protect all natural wetlands with buffers and setbacks.” As stated in our testimony, if towns wish to have regulations prohibiting building by more than 50 feet from a wetland, they should be allowed to do so. On March 13th, this bill was rereferred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

For information on additional bills download [bills to watch](#)

What you can do:

- Stay informed, NHACC will continue to send out updates.
- Write letters to [House Committees](#) or testify at hearings.
- Be able to act quickly, call [your legislators](#) with concerns.
- Meet with your legislators once a year or better yet, invite them to a conservation commission meeting.

Letters do not follow the legislative process so you will need to continue to provide your comments and concerns to both House and Senate and subsequent committees. April 10 is the crossover deadline when a bill passes from one chamber (House) to move forward to another (Senate) or the opposite. For help on

writing letters, download the document [tips on writing letters to legislators](#).

Remember!

As individuals or as a commission, you can write letters to your state legislators. If you are writing or providing testimony as a commission, make sure you have discussed the issue in a commission meeting and voted to respond as a commission. Document in the meeting minutes the approved response and who will be designated to speak, or write on behalf of the commission.

Elected officials need to hear from constituents to learn more about issues and concerns. It is important to choose a topic that you are familiar with and that you are concerned or excited about. You can email comments and testimony directly to your Senators or State Reps on the General Court Website:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/>

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