

Senate Ways and Means Committee

Sonja Caldwell 271-2117

HB 1301-FN, increasing certain mooring fees and directing such funds to the cyanobacteria mitigation loan and grant fund.

Hearing Date: April 15, 2026

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Lang, Murphy, Sullivan, Rosenwald and Fenton

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill increases the fee for moorings not in a congregate mooring field and directs such funds to the cyanobacteria mitigation loan and grant fund.

Sponsors:

Rep. J. MacDonald

Rep. R. Brown

Rep. Crawford

Rep. Damon

Rep. Darby

Rep. Ebel

Rep. Hamblen

Rep. Walker

Rep. Peternel

Rep. Rung

Sen. McConkey

Who supports the bill: 104 individuals signed in support.

Full sign in sheets available upon request to sonja.caldwell@gc.nh.gov

Who opposes the bill: 3 individuals signed in opposition.

Who is neutral on the bill: 3 individuals sign in neutral.

Summary of testimony presented:

Rep. John MacDonald

- The bill would increase the mooring fee on five major lakes and two other additional lakes included via petition. This mooring fee has not been altered since the 1980's.
- The bill would provide funding for the Cyanobacteria Mitigation Loan and Grant Fund. Cyanobacteria is becoming a major concern across lakes, ponds, and rivers in New Hampshire.
- He provided a list of coastal mooring fees as a comparison of what we charge on our lakes versus at the coast.
- Half of the increase would go towards cyanobacteria, while the other half would go towards the Navigation Safety Fund.

- On the coast, the initial application fee is 50 dollars, followed by 15 dollars per foot with a minimum of 200 dollars.

Tim Dunlevy, Department of Safety Marine Patrol

- The Department does not take a position on the bill.
- The Marine Patrol permits approximately 5,000 moorings per year on New Hampshire inland waters. 1,700 of those are congregate or public moorings. The remainder are individual moorings.
- Public moorings are those reserved for transient boaters. Congregate moorings are most often associated with home owner associations and marinas. A congregate mooring field is defined as a field with more than four moorings in the field. That field goes through an application process, a public hearing, and review and is only permitted with approval of the Governor and Executive Council.
- Individual moorings are permitted to individual property owners who have a deeded frontage on a body of water requiring the permit. They can have up to four individual moorings placed in front of their property.
- There are eight bodies of water state-wide that require the permit.

Andrea LaMoreaux, New Hampshire Lakes

- NH Lakes supports the bill.
- The Cyanobacteria Mitigation Loan and Grant Fund has helped numerous lakes associations to protect against cyanobacteria blooms.
- This fund is nearly depleted.
- Ms. LaMoreaux stated that a number of constituents in these areas that have moorings have expressed a willingness to pay this fee to contribute to cyanobacteria mitigation.
- Ms. LaMoreaux stated that it was critical that lakeside communities be given the tools and resources to combat cyanobacteria blooms.

Senator Rosenwald asked what the association was doing to prevent cyanobacteria blooms from occurring rather than to simply mitigate the symptoms of the issue.

Ms. LaMoreaux answered that it was an important objective of her organization to prevent these blooms from occurring and that they work with lake associations throughout the state to inform property owners of what they can do, including informing them of how to clean their septic system and exercise caution around excessive fertilizer use.

Senator Sullivan asked why, as a nonprofit organization, NH Lakes could not instead create a fund for individuals to donate money if there was the desire among residents to address this situation.

Ms. LaMoreaux answered that this might be a better question for the state, who might be able to help establish such a program, but that lake associations and towns were already donating money to remediate cyanobacteria blooms. She explained that grants from the state are often matched by grants from local individuals, lake associations, and municipalities. Ms. LaMoreaux stated that these groups were already paying towards this effort but that they just needed more support.

David Neils and Amy Smagula, Department of Environmental Services

Senator Lang stated that it was his understanding that the primary source of cyanobacteria blooms was runoff, and not boats. He asked why this bill penalized boaters while letting other groups off the hook.

Mr. Neils answered that their cyanobacteria plan in 2023 documented that non-point source pollution was indeed one of the major contributors to the nutrient loads in the state's lakes and ponds. He stated that the intention of the bill was to provide a way for those that enjoy the lakes and ponds in the state to contribute funds towards the mitigation of this issue via fees. He stated that while the department was neutral on this bill, this seemed like a reasonable opportunity. He also explained that the department sees the need for funding to come from a diversity of different sources, and that this would be one potential source.