

HB 610-FN - AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

7Jan2026... 3076h

2025 SESSION

25-0346
07/06

HOUSE BILL

610-FN

AN ACT relative to the office of the consumer advocate.

SPONSORS: Rep. Berry, Hills. 44; Rep. Tom Mannion, Hills. 1; Rep. McFarlane, Graf. 18; Rep. Osborne, Rock. 2; Rep. Sweeney, Rock. 25; Rep. Alexander Jr., Hills. 29

COMMITTEE: Executive Departments and Administration

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill makes changes to the composition and objectives of the office of the consumer advocate.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT relative to the office of the consumer advocate.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Public Utilities; Support Personnel to Commission; Office of the Consumer Advocate. Amend
2 RSA 363:28, I(a) to read as follows:

3 (a) A consumer advocate, appointed by the governor and council, who shall be a qualified
4 attorney admitted to practice in this state, **a professional engineer, or an economist**. The
5 consumer advocate shall serve a 4-year term and until a successor is appointed and qualified.

6 2 Public Utilities; Support Personnel to Commission; Office of the Consumer Advocate. Amend
7 RSA 363:28, I(d) to read as follows:

8 (d) Three additional staff people appointed by the consumer advocate. When filling
9 these positions, the consumer advocate should consider appointing ~~[rate analysts]~~ **at least one**
10 **attorney and consider appointing additional attorneys, rate analysts,** or economists.

11 3 New Paragraph; Public Utilities; Support Personnel to Commission; Office of the Consumer
12 Advocate. Amend RSA 363:28 by inserting after paragraph I the following new paragraph:

13 I-a. In discharging the powers and duties enumerated in this section, the consumer advocate
14 shall focus exclusively on assuring that residential utility customers receive safe and reliable service
15 at the lowest possible cost while maximizing customer freedom and autonomy.

16 4 Public Utilities; Support Personnel to Commission; Office of the Consumer Advocate. Amend
17 RSA 363:28, IV to read as follows:

18 IV. The consumer advocate shall have authority to promote and further consumer
19 knowledge and education. The consumer advocate shall advocate against proposed regional or
20 federal rules or policies that are inconsistent with **paragraph I-a and** the policies, rules, or laws of
21 New Hampshire. In its participation in regional activities, the consumer advocate shall consider
22 how other states' policies will impact New Hampshire rates and work to prevent or minimize any
23 rate impact ~~[the consumer advocate determines to be unjust or unreasonable]~~.

24 5 Public Utilities; Support Personnel to Commission; Residential Ratepayers Advisory Board.
25 RSA 363:28-a is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

26 363:28-a Residential Ratepayers Advisory Board.

27 I. There is established the residential ratepayers advisory board which shall provide
28 oversight of the office of the consumer advocate as established by RSA 363:28 and ensure that the
29 consumer advocate shall focus exclusively on assuring that residential utility customers receive safe
30 and reliable service at the lowest possible cost while maximizing customer freedom and autonomy.
31 The advisory board shall consist of the following public members:

1 (a) Three members appointed by the speaker of the house. One shall represent the
2 interests of residential ratepayers; one shall represent the interests of the elderly; and one shall be a
3 member of the public.

4 (b) Three members appointed by the senate president. One shall represent the interests
5 of residential ratepayers; one shall represent the interests of the disabled; and one shall represent
6 environmental concerns.

7 (c) Three members appointed by the governor and council. One shall represent the
8 interests of persons of low income; one shall represent the interests of small business owners; and
9 one shall represent the interests of residents of low-income housing.

10 II. Members shall serve 3-year terms. In the event of death or resignation of any member of
11 the advisory board, the person or entity that made the original appointment shall appoint a
12 successor, and the successor appointed to the vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired
13 term. The members of the board shall receive no compensation but shall be entitled to
14 reimbursement for mileage at the same rate provided for state employees.

15 III. The board shall elect annually a chairperson from among its membership.

16 IV. The board shall receive administrative support from the office of the consumer advocate.

17 V.(a) The board shall meet at least quarterly and at the call of the chairperson or 3 board
18 members. The consumer advocate shall be present for all board meetings to inform the board of the
19 actions of the office of the consumer advocate and to respond to the board's inquiries.

20 (b) Except as pertains to any end user of an excepted local exchange carrier or services
21 provided to such end user, the board shall advise the consumer advocate on matters concerning
22 residential ratepayers.

23 (c) Prior to the expiration of the consumer advocate's term, the board shall recommend
24 to the governor and council whether to reappoint the consumer advocate. If the board does not
25 recommend reappointment or the governor and council do not accept the board's recommendation to
26 reappoint, the board shall then recommend 3 persons to the governor and council to fill the position.

27 (d) After providing notice and opportunity for a hearing to the consumer advocate, the
28 oversight board may by two-thirds vote recommend that the governor seek the removal of the
29 consumer advocate for failure to discharge the powers, duties, and limitations set forth in RSA
30 363:28. A failure to discharge the powers, duties, and limitations set forth in RSA 363:28 shall be
31 deemed adequate grounds for removal of the consumer advocate pursuant to RSA 4:1, and a removal
32 recommendation from the oversight board shall be deemed a petition to the governor and council
33 within the meaning of RSA 4:1, II.

34 6 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 90 days after its passage.

LBA
25-0346
1/13/26

**HB 610-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE (AMENDMENT # 2025-3076h)**

AN ACT relative to the office of the consumer advocate.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Budget Assistant states this bill has no fiscal impact on state, county and local expenditures or revenue.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

None