

HB 573-FN-A - AS INTRODUCED

2025 SESSION

25-0117

08/11

HOUSE BILL ***573-FN-A***

AN ACT relative to the funding for search and rescue operations of the fish and game department and making an appropriation therefor.

SPONSORS: Rep. Love, Rock. 13; Sen. Watters, Dist 4

COMMITTEE: Fish and Game and Marine Resources

ANALYSIS

This bill provides that general funds shall be used for funding search and rescue operations of the fish and game department and authorizes the executive director of fish and game to invest in technology necessary to enable the solicitation and collection of donations. Such funds collected shall be credited to the fish and game search and rescue fund. This bill also makes an appropriation to the fish and game department to purchase technology necessary to enable the solicitation and collection of donations.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.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 funding for search and rescue operations of the fish and game department and making an appropriation therefor.

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

1 1 Fish and Game Search and Rescue Fund. Amend RSA 206:42 to read as follows:

2 206:42 Fish and Game Search and Rescue Fund.

3 ***I.*** The additional fee of \$1 collected under the provisions of RSA 270-E:5, II(b) for each
4 private boat registered, under RSA 215-A:23, X for each OHRV registered, and under RSA 215-C:39,
5 XI for each snowmobile registered, shall be paid over to the state treasurer who shall keep such fees
6 in a special fund to be expended by the fish and game department for use in search and rescue
7 operations.

8 ***II.*** *In addition to the funds in paragraph I, the state treasurer shall credit up to*
9 *\$200,000 annually from the general fund into the fish and game search and rescue fund. If*
10 *the executive director determines that funds provided in paragraphs I and II are*
11 *insufficient to pay for search and rescue operations activities in a fiscal year, the executive*
12 *director shall certify the amount of the insufficiency to the state treasurer who shall pay*
13 *such sum as necessary to fund search and rescue operations activities from the general*
14 *fund. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for such sum under this paragraph*
15 *out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.*

16 ***III.*** The special fund shall be nonlapsing. All funds received under this subdivision are
17 continually appropriated to the fish and game department [~~for the purposes of this subdivision~~] ***and***
18 ***shall be used to fund search and rescue operations including, but not limited to salaries,***
19 ***training, equipment, and associated expenditures.*** The fish and game department shall report
20 to the fiscal committee ***and the house fish and game and marine resources committee*** on a
21 quarterly basis beginning on October 1, 1989, on the expenditures made from the fund. ***The report***
22 ***shall include details as to search and rescue operations and expenditures during the***
23 ***reporting period, and the remaining balance in the fund at the end of the reporting period.***

24 ***IV.*** *The executive director may invest in technology necessary to enable the*
25 *solicitation and collection of donations. The executive director shall credit any donations*
26 *collected under this paragraph to the fish and game search and rescue fund.*

27 2 Appropriation; Technology for Donation Collection; Fish and Game. The sum of \$50,000 is
28 hereby appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 to the fish and game commission for the
29 purpose of investing in technology necessary to enable the solicitation and collection of donations to

HB 573-FN-A - AS INTRODUCED

- Page 2 -

- 1 fund search and rescue programs. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sum out of
- 2 any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.
- 3 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

**HB 573-FN-A- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT relative to the funding for search and rescue operations of the fish and game department and making an appropriation therefor.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenue	\$0	\$0	<u>Donation Revenue</u> Indeterminable	
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	Search and Rescue Fund			
Expenditures*	\$0	<u>General Funds for the Search and Rescue Fund</u> Indeterminable (See Methodology Below) <u>General Funds for Technology Investment</u> \$50,000 in FY 2027 <u>Search and Rescue Fund Spending</u> Indeterminable		
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General Fund, Search and Rescue Fund			
Appropriations*	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General Fund			

***Expenditure = Cost of bill**

***Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill**

METHODOLOGY:

This bill seeks to provide general funds to the search and rescue fund for operational activities; an undefined annual transfer as well as an open-ended amount to cover any insufficiency in the search and rescue fund. This bill also appropriates \$50,000 in general funds to the Fish and Game Department in FY 2027 for the purpose of investing in technology necessary to enable the collection of donations for the search and rescue fund.

Section 1 of this bill (RSA 206:42, II), includes a provision stating the state treasurer shall credit “up to” \$200,000 annually from the general fund to the search and rescue fund. With this being an undefined amount, it is unclear how much would be transferred each year, or how the determination would be made.

Section 1 also includes a provision relative to the general fund covering any insufficiency in the search and rescue fund. This amount is indeterminable, as it would be based on actual fund

activity, however it should be noted that the search and rescue fund is continually appropriated, meaning the Department may spend whatever is needed for search and rescue operations activities (including but not limited to salaries, training, equipment, and associated expenditures). To this extent, under this bill, the general fund would be available, open-ended, to the Department to cover any search and rescue expenditures that exceed search and rescue available resources. In FY 2024, the Department reported the following activity for the search and rescue fund:

Beginning Balance	Revenue	Expenses	Ending Balance	Commitments
\$475,269	\$587,494	(\$467,352)	\$595,411	(\$207,573)

It is assumed the entire \$50,000 general fund appropriation relative to the technology investment for the collection of search and rescue donations would be expended in FY 2027 and it is unknown how much in donation revenue may be received.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Fish and Game Department