

Senate Transportation Committee

Vivian Hall 271-3091

HB 105-FN, creating a new conservation license plate and directing the additional fee to the cyanobacteria mitigation loan and grant fund.

Hearing Date: March 25, 2025

Time Opened: 1:01 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:43 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ricciardi, McConkey, Ward, Fenton and Prentiss

Bill Analysis: This bill creates the "Love NH Lakes" number plate and directs that the residual amount of the special fee for the plate and royalties and proceeds from the commercial use of its design be deposited in the cyanobacteria mitigation loan and grant fund.

Sponsors:

Rep. Rung

Rep. Crawford

Rep. Darby

Rep. J. MacDonald

Rep. Veilleux

Sen. Watters

Who supports the bill: 413 people signed in support of the bill. Full sign-in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Vivian Hall (Vivian.Hall@gc.nh.gov).

Who opposes the bill: 3 people signed in opposition of the bill. Full sign-in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Vivian Hall (Vivian.Hall@gc.nh.gov).

Who is neutral on the bill: 4 people signed in as neutral on the bill. Full sign-in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Vivian Hall (Vivian.Hall@gc.nh.gov).

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Rosemarie Rung, Hillsborough 12:

- House Bill 105 would create a special license plate to fund the cyanobacteria fund for New Hampshire's lakes, similar to the moose license plate for wildlife conservation.

- Purchasing this plate would help mitigate bacteria blooms, which pose a risk to the health of people and animals.
- It would be paid for by the initial fund, which is allocated to the Department of Environmental Services.
- Senator Ricciardi remarked that the license plate would increase awareness for those who don't know about the issue.
- Representative Rung concurred.
- Senator McConkey inquired if the Division of Motor Vehicles testified previously about the cost to produce special plates and if decals were considered.
- Representative Rung replied that the Division of Motor Vehicles is optimistic about covering the costs.

Dick McIntyre

- Mr. McIntyre is in support of the bill.
- He believes the "Love the Lakes" plate would generate a lot of revenue towards the cyanobacteria mitigation fund.

Andrea LaMoreaux, President, New Hampshire Lakes

- Ms. LaMoreaux believes the special plate would be successful.
- She said that if the decal plate method was implemented, a non-profit like hers would be charged to create the decal plate and would initially cost money.

Representative John MacDonald:

- Representative MacDonald expressed his support for this bill.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition:

Mike Marchand, New Hampshire Fish and Game:

- Mr. Marchand voiced concern that the Loon Plate would directly compete with the existing moose plate funds.
- He stated that the plate would further hurt conservation efforts.
- Mr. Marchand encouraged alternative funding sources, including decal plates.
- Senator McConkey asked if Mr. Marchand could get back to him in regard to what the revenue stream was for the last couple of years for the moose plate. He replied that he could.
- Senator McConkey inquired how long the moose plates have existed. Mr. Marchand said he was unsure.

Neutral Information Presented:

John Marasco, Director, Division of Motor Vehicles:

- Mr. Marasco stated it would cost \$25,000 to provide for the system upgrade needed to produce the license plates.
- He noted that decals are the preferred method.
- Senator McConkey asked if any of the money spent on producing the plates would go back to the state.
- Mr. Marasco voiced concern over the fiscal note.
- Senator Ricciardi agreed the fiscal note needs to match the actual cost to produce the special plates.
- Mr. Marasco also discussed the time-frame to produce the plates and added the Division of Motor Vehicles has no position on the bill.

Amy Smagula, Chief Aquatic Biologist, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services:

- Ms. Smagula stated that Governor Sununu directed the Department of Environmental Services to create a plan to control algae blooms.
- The Department of Environmental Services created a plan to target these harmful blooms.
- Ms. Smagula highlighted the results of a project the department is monitoring.
- She stated there is only \$200,000 left to combat the algae blooms.

Sabrina Stanwood, New Hampshire Forests and Lands:

- Ms. Stanwood stated that the decal plate might be wiser.
- She questioned how the state would receive funds from people who mainly live out of state.

Ian Hanley, Executive Director, New Hampshire State Conservation Community:

- Director Hanley described what the grants towards conservation do.
- He explained that his organization has given over 2.9 million dollars in grants to address various environmental concerns and projects.
- \$500,000.00 was allocated towards water and water quality throughout the state.