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# NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee

NH Rivers Management and Protection Program



January 22, 2025

The Honorable Terry Roy, Chair  
House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 202-204  
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: HB 416** *An act relative to prohibiting the intentional disposal of yard waste into the surface waters of the state.*

Dear Chair Roy and Members of the Committee,

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its **support of House Bill 416**, which prohibits dumping yard waste into waterbodies.

The RMAC supports this bill because

- As yard waste decays, it releases nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen into the water. Excess nutrients are the primary cause of toxic cyanobacteria blooms, which threaten public health, impede recreation, and can diminish business revenues and property values;
- Although yard waste is not the primary source of nutrient pollution, the cumulative effects of many small pollution sources can be significant;
- In addition to nutrients, yard waste can be a source of other pollutants, such as plastics, oil, and more. These pollutants can damage the health of aquatic organisms;
- The shallow areas where people dump yard waste are particularly sensitive to disturbance and changes; and
- Dumping yard waste can create mucky areas that affect the aquatic ecosystem and public use, fill in areas that fish use to spawn, and reduce dissolved oxygen levels in ways that can harm fish and increase the likelihood of cyanobacteria blooms.

Current law makes it illegal to add material to wetlands, including rivers and lakes, without a permit (RSA 482-A). When dumped in surface waters, yard waste is a type of fill and thus already illegal to deposit in a waterbody. However, many residents are unaware that yard waste is subject to this law, and every year New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) staff and partners receive questions about the practice. Having a clear, specific ban on disposing yard waste, such as exists for the incineration or landfill disposal of yard waste, would ease communication with the public and protect water quality by increasing compliance.

The Honorable Terry Roy  
Chair, House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee  
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The RMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with NHDES to administer RSA 483, the Rivers Management and Protection Program. The Governor and Council appointed Committee is composed of members from business, agriculture, hydroelectric, municipal government, water supply, conservation, recreation, fish and game, and historical interests.

Should you have any questions regarding our testimony in support of HB 416, feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or [MLT@naturesource.net](mailto:MLT@naturesource.net).

Sincerely,



Michele L. Tremblay, Chair

ec: Representatives Rung, Richard Brown, Crawford, Ebel, John MacDonald and Murphy  
RMAC Representatives  
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES