



March 11, 2025

Rep. Gregory Hill, Chair

House Committee on Legislative Administration Committee

NH State House of Representatives

Legislative Office Building

Concord, NH 03301

Submitted: Via Committee Email/ Portal

RE: NO Support for House Bill 456 relative to testimony of agency employees in general court hearings. As amended, as amended 2025-0721h, AN ACT prohibiting the use of certain local funds for lobbying.

Dear Chair, Gregory Hill, and committee members,

New Hampshire Water Works Association (NHWWA) is a nonprofit membership organization that provides workforce training, knowledge, and advocacy for New Hampshire's water utilities. NHWWA helps its members deliver safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water to New Hampshire families, communities, organizations, and businesses. NHWWA's supporters include water utilities and systems, water system equipment and materials manufacturers and suppliers, engineers, consultants, government regulators, and their respective employees.

After reviewing HB 456 we will **not** support this bill.

1. This bill prohibits all local officials from any form of advocacy.
 - a. It broadly prohibits ANY public funds from being used to "lobby, attempt to influence legislation, participate in political activity, or contribute funds to any entity for the purpose of engaging in same." This would prevent any local official, whether a paid employee or an elected official receiving a stipend, from any advocacy on behalf of its city or town because that activity would be funded with public money.
2. This bill prohibits others (recipients of public funds) from lobbying.
 - a. This bill affects NHWWA along with Every Organization that accepts "public funds" including Police, Fire, Wastewater, Public Works, and Schools. Lobbying is reported and made public already the vague



language in this bill strips all rights away from public and private organizations that receive said, “Public Funds.”

3. This bill would cost taxpayers money.
 - a. NHWWA thrives on its ability to speak on behalf of the Water Works community. And part of our mission is to represent these people who are working to provide the best possible drinking water to NH communities. Our advocacy falls into one main category, what is best for NH Water. We help by supporting bills and by defeating bills, that we can back with science and data that is provided by our community of water system operators, engineers, and regulators in NH. We have a committee dedicated to advocating NH water systems and by stripping us of the ability to provide this service to NHWWA members it will drive costs for water up. Every new cost on municipalities is paid for by taxpayers/water users, we support the systems and advocate for State and federal money to keep their costs down to prevent such a thing.

4. This bill strips local officials and town meetings of authority to make their own local decisions.
 - a. Dues paid to organizations that provide services to local officials, such as legal services, training, and advocacy, are included by local officials in municipal budgets. In most NH municipalities, these budgets are adopted by the voters. In the rest, they are adopted by the representatives the voters elect to make those decisions for them. Cities, Towns, Water Districts and Precincts make decisions every year to be members of organizations that provide these services to make them more efficient and to operate in a more cost-effective manner. The state should not supplant its judgment for that of our local officials or voters on local spending decisions.

NHWWA works with You, and other elected officials. Unfortunately, this bill strips every right we have away from not only us, but every association that currently works alongside side of state officials and develops the best possible outcomes for New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

Samuel Currier

New Hampshire Water Works Association

President CEO