



2101 Dover Road
Epsom, NH 03234
(603) 736-4401 
info@nhrecycles.org 
www.NHrecycles.org 

January 20, 2026

Hon. Judy Aron, Chair
House Environment and Agriculture Committee
1 Granite Place, Room 153
Concord, New Hampshire

Re: HB 1602: Creating a safe battery recycling stewardship program

Dear Chair Aron and Members of the Committee:

NH Recycles (formerly the Northeast Resource Recovery Association) is a cooperative-model recycling nonprofit with over 40 years of experience partnering with New Hampshire (NH) municipalities to provide cooperative marketing programs, education, and technical assistance in support of recycling and waste reduction. **Ninety percent of NH towns and cities are members of NH Recycles.** I also serve on the NH Solid Waste Working Group, which was formed to advise the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) on planning for NH's solid waste future.

HB 1602 would establish a statewide battery recycling stewardship program. As a matter of policy, NH Recycles does not take a position on any proposed legislation. Therefore, **NH Recycles takes no position on HB 1602.** However, this testimony will share with the Committee about NH Recycles' experience supporting municipalities with their recycling efforts in NH as it relates to the bill.

NH Recycles works with dozens of recycling companies to help municipalities in NH find end markets for their recyclable material, including batteries and electronics. In 2024, NH Recycles helped its member communities recycle over 1.2 million pounds of electronics, which saved enough energy to power over 37,000 homes for one day.

The improper disposal of rechargeable batteries is becoming a costly safety hazard for NH municipalities and recycling businesses due to an increase in fires, property damage, and fines.

The reasons for this trend include the following:

- When rechargeable lithium-ion batteries (such as those found in phone, laptops, and power tools) are improperly disposed of in the trash instead of recycled, they can cause fires when damaged by waste handling equipment.
- Lithium-ion battery fires burn hotter, longer, and are more difficult to extinguish due to the chemical reactions that cause the fire.
- According to a recent report by the National Waste & Recycling Association¹, more than 5,000 fires are estimated to occur annually at recycling facilities nationwide. Lithium-ion batteries are increasingly the cause of such fires.

¹ <https://www.wastetodaymagazine.com/news/nwra-rrs-report-assesses-fire-risk-to-waste-recycling-infrastructure/>

- The annual cost to the U.S. and Canada due to lithium-ion battery fires is estimated to be more than \$1.2 billion.²
- A survey of 39 states ranked “Batteries, Non-Electric Vehicle (EV) Lithium-ion” as the number one most difficult waste material to manage.³

In addition, a national scrap metal recycling company that works with many municipalities and businesses in NH experienced a 4-alarm fire at one of its facilities in MA. The company subsequently implemented fines for its customers when hazardous contaminants are found in scrap metal for recycling. NH Recycles is aware of over 45 instances in the past two years where batteries have been found in scrap metal, resulting in fines to municipalities totaling over \$16,500.

NH Recycles is aware of many recent examples of fires at NH transfer stations related to rechargeable batteries.

- The **City of Keene** had fires in 2020, 2024, and 2025 resulting in injuries to a firefighter and damage costing over \$400,000. At least one fire was suspected to be caused by a lithium-ion battery.
- The **Town of Lee** had a fire in 2022 from a lithium battery in the trash. Fortunately, the staff quickly contained the fire. NH Recycles created an educational video about the importance of properly recycling batteries that includes footage of the fire.⁴
- **Granite State Recycling in Weare** had a fire in 2025. The fire at this private recycling company destroyed the entire facility.⁵ While the cause of the fire was not certain, the company suspected a lithium-ion battery.
- The **Town of Pelham** had a fire in 2025 caused by an electric bike battery in scrap metal. Fortunately, staff were able to segregate and contain the fire before it spread.

In response to the increased risk of fires from improperly disposed rechargeable batteries, NH Recycles will be holding four Safety Summits this year to share information with municipalities about how to best prevent and respond to lithium-ion battery fires at transfer stations. NH Recycles is collaborating with the NHDES Solid Waste Management Bureau and the State Fire Marshal to plan these events.

Sincerely,



Reagan Bissonnette
Executive Director

² <https://www.waste360.com/waste-management-business/li-ion-battery-fires-unfairly-cost-waste-recycling-and-scrap-operators-over-1-2-billion-annually>

³ https://astswmo.org/files/Policies_and_Publications/Materials_Management/2024-04-04-Final-Difficult-to-Manage-Materials-Survey-Report.pdf

⁴ <https://www.nhrecycles.org/news/lithium-battery-fire-lee-nh>

⁵ <https://www.wmur.com/article/weare-new-hampshire-fire-91925/67959801>