



January 22, 2026

Chair Joe Alexander
New Hampshire House Committee on Housing
Legislative Offices, 1 Granite Place, Room 231
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1540, AN ACT establishing uniform requirements for accessory dwelling units and providing municipalities with authority and guidance for zoning, permitting, and environmental protections

Dear Chair Alexander and Members of the House Housing Committee,

On behalf of NH LAKES, I am writing to express our strong support for HB 1540, establishing uniform requirements for accessory dwelling units and providing municipalities with authority and guidance for zoning, permitting, and environmental protections.

NH LAKES represents approximately 150 local lake associations, community groups, and thousands of individuals across New Hampshire. We are a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring and preserving the health of New Hampshire's lakes. Clean and healthy lakes are essential to drinking water supplies, recreation, fisheries, wildlife habitat, tourism, and the economic vitality of our state.

What This Bill Does

HB 1540 updates New Hampshire's accessory dwelling unit (ADU) law by clarifying how ADUs are treated within the protected shoreland (land within 250 feet of most lakes, ponds, rivers, and coastal waters). Specifically, HB 1540 limits the "by-right" allowance of ADUs in the protected shoreland and clarifies that municipalities may permit attached or detached ADUs in those areas at their discretion. This bill is a targeted change that applies only within the protected shoreland while maintaining ADU allowances statewide.

HB 1540 responds to a change in state law that took effect July 1, 2025, which requires towns to allow attached or detached ADUs by right anywhere single-family homes are permitted—including within the protected shoreland. Before that change, municipalities could decide whether ADUs were appropriate near the water.