

January 23, 2026

Municipal and County Government Committee
New Hampshire House of Representatives
Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Chair Pauer and members of the Committee,

As Chair of the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) Board of Directors, I appreciate the opportunity to offer several considerations related to New Hampshire House Bill 1649 as the Committee continues its review.

LCHIP's enabling legislation, RSA 227-M, expressly provides that (*emphasis added*):

“The intent of the program is to conserve and preserve this state's most important natural, cultural, and historical resources through the acquisition of lands, and cultural and historical resources, or interests therein, of local, regional, and statewide significance, **in partnership with the state's municipalities and the private sector**, for the primary purposes of protecting and ensuring the perpetual contribution of these resources to the state's economy, environment, and overall quality of life.”

A foundational principle of LCHIP's work—and of New Hampshire civic life more broadly—is the State's long-standing tradition of public-private partnerships between municipalities and nonprofit organizations. This collaborative approach, often described as the “New Hampshire Way,” reflects a practical, locally driven model in which communities, local governments, and nonprofits work together to address shared needs efficiently and responsibly.

We are concerned that House Bill 1649, as introduced, would have significant implications for LCHIP's ability to fulfill its statutory charge and could alter—and potentially undermine or eliminate—the public-private partnerships on which much of LCHIP's success has been built.

In the context of LCHIP's land conservation and historic preservation efforts, these partnerships are essential. They enable municipalities to advance high-priority projects that they would not otherwise have the financial or administrative capacity to undertake independently.

Because municipal contributions to these projects require approval by the municipality's legislative body—whether through town meeting or a city council vote—via a transparent public process, LCHIP views municipal financial participation as a clear indicator of local commitment, accountability, and public benefit.



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Finally, most LCHIP-funded projects led by nonprofits rely, at least in part, on municipal contributions as a component of the required LCHIP match. Prohibiting such contributions would impose immediate financial challenges on projects already underway and would remove a key incentive for nonprofit organizations to partner with municipalities to achieve shared conservation and preservation goals.

We offer these observations in the interest of supporting informed discussion and thoughtful consideration of the potential impacts this legislation could have on the conservation and historic preservation projects that LCHIP has successfully supported for more than 25 years. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Richard Lewis

[Richard Lewis \(Jan 22, 2026 10:29:35 EST\)](#)

Richard Lewis, Chair
NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program
Board of Directors






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Final Audit Report

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