

February 2, 2026

Michael Vose, Chairman
Science, Technology and Energy Committee
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RE: Letter on HB 1745, relative to the allocation of public utility costs to ratepayers.

Dear Chairman Vose and Honorable Members of the Science, Technology and Energy Committee:

The Business and Industry Association (BIA) and the undersigned Chambers of Commerce oppose HB 1745, relative to the allocation of public utility costs to ratepayers.

HB 1745 prohibits utilities from recovering from rates any costs associated with activities before the Public Utility Commission (PUC). Utilities are mandatory participants in PUC cases. Removing cost recovery penalizes them for fulfilling a legal obligation. That penalty incentivizes utilities to minimize engagement resulting in less data and analysis for regulators, which can translate into less informed regulatory decisions. That, in turn, will result in less predictable business conditions as decisions are challenged and, potentially, higher long-term rates for commercial and industrial customers.

Additionally, HB 1745 prohibits utilities from recovering from rates any costs associated with membership, dues, sponsorships, or contributions to any business or industry trade association, group, or related entity incorporated under section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code. This creates a new barrier to participation for utilities in local and regional chambers, many of which are incorporated under section 501(c)(6). Utilities are valuable members of many of the local and regional chambers who contribute not only expertise, but also provide the larger business community with personal-points-of-contact for issues and dedicated participants who can provide insight as local and regional chambers work hand-in-hand with their local governments and larger communities to provide additional economic development opportunities that lack of participation and support for events may hinder the chambers mission.

PROMOTING A HEALTHY CLIMATE FOR JOB CREATION AND A STRONG NEW HAMPSHIRE ECONOMY

Last, HB 1745 prohibits rate recovery of advertising, marketing, or promotional costs, unless the PUC determines that those activities are directly benefit ratepayers and are necessary for the provision of utility service. The delay caused by the uncertainty as to how utilities may fund such programs may impact a variety of outreach efforts conducted by utilities. Approval for individualized public safety communications about storm readiness and downed-line would be challenging to obtain in the midst of a severe weather event. Separately, utility outreach to businesses about incentives, rate options, or regulatory changes would likely be delayed or challenging to implement if the utility must seek PUC approval prior to such outreach efforts.

For these reasons, the Business and Industry Association and the and the undersigned Chambers of Commerce ask the committee to oppose HB 1745.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Skelton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Skelton
President/CEO
Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire

Bryanna Marceau, President & CEO
Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce

Heather McGrail, President & CEO
Greater Manchester Chamber

John Nyhan, President
Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce

Julie Schoelzel, President & CEO
Greater Monadnock Collaborative

Ben Van Camp, President
The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth