

2025 SESSION

25-XXXX
XX/XX

HOUSE RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION opposing the permitting of a landfill next to Forest Lake State Park in Dalton, New Hampshire.

SPONSORS:

COMMITTEE: Environment and Agriculture

ANALYSIS

This resolution urges the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services to deny any permitting for a landfill next to Forest Lake State Park in Dalton, New Hampshire.

25-XXXX
XX/XX

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

A RESOLUTION urging the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services to deny any permitting for the construction and operation of a solid waste facility next to Forest Lake State Park in Dalton, New Hampshire.

Whereas, the general court finds that New Hampshire has a compelling government interest in protecting human health, preserving the natural environment, and conserving precious and dwindling natural resources, in accordance with RSA 149-M; and

Whereas, Forest Lake State Park is one of the ten original state parks, created in 1935. The park spans 397 acres and its 200-foot sandy beach lies on the shore of Forest Lake. Popular activities in the park include swimming, picnicking, mountain biking, fishing, and boating; and

Whereas, the mission of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services is to help sustain a high quality of life for all citizens by protecting and restoring the environment and public health in New Hampshire. The protection and wise management of the state's environment are the main goals of the agency; and

Whereas, according to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, New Hampshire's diverse natural resources support many of the activities that drive New Hampshire's economy. Residents, businesses and visitors enjoy New Hampshire's wetlands, streams, lakes and the seacoast for their natural beauty and recreational opportunities. In addition to their economic value, New Hampshire's wetland resources are of great importance for flood control, water quality, water storage and recharge for both groundwater and surface waters. These functions are more valuable with the expected increase in frequency and severity of storm events associated with climate change. Wetlands also support the food chain, providing food and habitat for a variety of aquatic and upland plants and wildlife; and

Whereas, according to the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, “The ownership and management of state-owned lands in New Hampshire have a long history of tradition with clear direction provided by state law. The enactment of RSA 227-H in 1996 further affirms that “It is hereby recognized and declared that state-owned reservations contribute to the conservation of natural resources and distinctive quality of life in the state. The public welfare of this state is served by the prudent acquisition and management of reservations to provide forest benefits and for the purposes of demonstrating sound forestry principles, protecting habitat for plants, animals, and other organisms, conserving forested watersheds, preserving areas of rare and exemplary natural beauty and ecological value, and providing for perpetual public access and use”; and

Whereas, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department Vision Statement in 2020 states “The State of New Hampshire is endowed with scenic beauty and abundant natural resources, which have shaped who we are today and will strongly influence who we will be in future decades. The presence of fish, wildlife and marine resources is intricately linked to our quality of life and to our identity as citizens of New Hampshire. As guardian of New Hampshire's fish, wildlife, and marine resources, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department Strategic Plan of 2017-22 states “Citizens and visitors receive both economic and intrinsic benefits from fish, wildlife and marine resources that significantly enhance their quality of life”; and

Whereas, the mission statement of the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau reads “Our mission, as mandated by the Native Plant Protection Act of 1987 (RSA 217-A) is to determine protective measures and requirements necessary for the survival of native plant species in the state, to investigate the condition and degree of rarity of plant species, and to distribute information regarding the condition and protection of these species and their habitats; and

Whereas, “Summer is the state’s busiest tourism season” according to the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs, and the 2023 summer season “is expected to draw record crowds, with \$4.3 million people project to visit. Spending by those visitors is expected to reach \$2.35 billion”; and

Whereas, the New Hampshire Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry Development (ORID) website states, “New Hampshire’s vast outdoor resources drive economic development. New Hampshire’s countless lakes, mountains, beaches, rivers, trail systems and other outdoor recreation spaces are the foundation of the state’s economy. They attract sustainable businesses and a diverse workforce and preserve the state’s resources for use by future generations”; and

Whereas, the NH Division of Travel and Tourism Development’s “Granite State Promise” is a pledge to protect, respect and preserve the state's natural beauty; and

Whereas, the Visit NH website states “If you’re looking for a more active vacation, or if you’re just looking to get your toes wet (pun intended) New Hampshire has outdoor activities for every season and every ability. New Hampshire has a backyard vibe you’ll be pressed to find anywhere else”; and

Whereas, the NH Department of Natural & Cultural Resources mission statement is “to protect, preserve, promote and manage the State’s natural and cultural resources, supporting New Hampshire’s high quality of life and strengthening the experiences of our residents and guests; and

Whereas, the mission statement of the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau reads “Our mission, as mandated by the Native Plant Protection Act of 1987 (RSA 217-A) is to determine protective measures and requirements necessary for the survival of native plant species in the state, to investigate the condition and degree of rarity of plant species, and to distribute information regarding the condition and protection of these species and their habitats; and

Whereas, The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts (NHACD) was formed in 1946 to provide statewide coordination, representation, and leadership for Conservation Districts to conserve, protect, and promote responsible use of New Hampshire’s natural resources; and

Whereas, New Hampshire has lost fewer wetlands to filling and dredging than many neighboring coastal states, landscape change poses a significant challenge to the protection of New Hampshire’s wetlands and natural resources. It is found to be for the public good and welfare of the State of New Hampshire to protect and preserve both tidal and fresh waters and its wetlands (including lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, marshes, forested wetlands and peatlands) from unregulated despoliation because of the important functions and values that these aquatic resources provide, such as:

- (1) Absorbing flood waters;
- (2) Treating stormwater;
- (3) Recharging groundwater supplies;
- (4) Providing habitat for fish and wildlife;
- (5) Providing economic and recreational value; and

Whereas, protecting and restoring the waters of New Hampshire help sustain a high quality of life. New Hampshire is fortunate to have an extensive network of rivers and streams. The state's waterways have continued to be adversely impacted by wastewater discharges and nonpoint sources of pollution such as urban and agricultural runoff, septic systems, storm water from construction activities and urbanized areas, water withdrawals and atmospheric deposition. Water experts have learned that the quality, quantity and ecology of both surface and groundwater are affected by all of the activities occurring within a particular watershed. As a result, there is an increasing need to address water resources on a watershed basis through close collaboration among various state and local organizations. There are almost 1,000 public lakes and ponds throughout New Hampshire.

"Ensuring the vitality of lakes and ponds as biological, social and economic assets of the state"; and Whereas, the primary factor that impacts the water quality in rivers and lakes is what drains from the land into the water. All of the land that drains to a particular body of water is called its watershed. Within every watershed, water runs to the lowest point on that landscape - a stream, river, lake, estuary or ocean. On its way, the water travels across farm fields, forestland, parking lots, highways, city streets and backyards. Watershed management incorporates monitoring, public participation, planning and restoration; and

Whereas, according to the NHDES Air Division, people "take a breath over 20,000 times a day. Good air quality is important to your health and to the environment. Air pollution comes from many different sources: industrial sources such as factories and power plants and smaller sources such as asphalt plants, dry cleaners and degreasing operations; the transportation sector such as cars, buses, planes, trucks, and trains; and naturally occurring sources such as windblown dust and volcanic eruptions. Air quality can be affected in many ways by the pollution emitted from these sources and air pollutants can have different health effects on the human body"; and

Whereas, the nuisances associated with landfills and their impacts on the surrounding environment are well-documented, making them an incompatible neighbor to a state park and lakeside community; and

Whereas, the stigma, nuisances, and threat to public health, safety, environment, natural resources, as well as the state and North Country tourism and outdoor recreation economies, posed by permitting an operating landfill abutting Forest Lake State Park, cannot be underestimated and is of grave concern to the general court; and

Whereas, the risks in permitting a landfill next to Forest Lake State Park far outweigh any benefit; now, therefore, be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

The general court resolves to protect the interests of the state and its citizens by asking the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Service, the governor, and the attorney general to take all appropriate legal actions against the permitting of a landfill next to Forest Lake State Park in Dalton, New Hampshire; and

That the house clerk transmit a copy of this resolution to the department, the governor and the attorney general.