

HB 495 Seacoast Drinking Water Commission
Draft Minutes
February 28, 2020
NHDES Portsmouth Office

Members present: Representative Pat Bushway (Chair), Representative Mike Edgar (Vice Chair), Jennifer Hale, Dana Truslow, Jen Czysz, Patricia Bickford, Brandon Kernan, Carl McMorran, Art Ditto, Anne Lightbody, Brian Goetz, Representative Renny Cushing

Chairman Bushway opened the meeting at 2:05 PM, and following introductions, the members conducted a review of the draft letter for the Commission to send to the Ground Water/Drinking Water Trust Fund Advisory Commission in support of and requesting grant funding for the proposed regional water system interconnection project between Portsmouth and Dover at Dover Point. The following edits to the draft were recommended:

- Begin the letter with an introduction of the Seacoast Drinking Water Commission and its composition and purpose
- Remove the word “interconnections” from the second sentence because not all water systems south of Dover Point are interconnected
- Include the names of the four communities to the north and eight communities to the south that will be served by the project
- Include the total population served by the project

With the recommended edits, the members agreed that the letter should be sent to the Advisory Commission as soon as possible so that the commission has the letter when representatives from Dover and Portsmouth make a presentation on the project to the commission in April.

Following the review of the draft letter, Representative Edgar summarized his discussion with the Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding the project which included the following:

- The contract for the bridge is likely to be let in late summer with construction shifting from 2020 to 2022
- The design work for the bridge structure should include the load for the pipe, and that must be approved by DOT for inclusion in their design
- Bridge construction will use turnpike funds, but it’s unclear if the work to accommodate the pipe can be done with turnpike funds due to restrictions on those funds

The next order of business was a review of pending legislation that may be of interest to the commission. Chairman Bushway presented a list of bills and gave an update on where they are in the process. Of interest were HBs 1347 and 1252 that will adopt rules to address the impact on existing water users of new water sources that include small and large ground water withdrawals. Also, of interest was HB1603-FN that will establish the per and polyfluoroalkyl

substances contamination remediation and mitigation revolving loan program and fund. Funds generated by relevant legal actions will go into the fund as will funds generated by non-compliance with HB 1569-FN that will establish a registry of the use of fire suppressants containing certain contaminants and fines for municipalities that fail to meet registry requirements. The funds from both statutes will be combined for more efficient management.

The next order of business was the continued review of the tasks from the recommendations from the HB 485 report. Vice Chairman Edgar reviewed what has been completed to date and continued with the remaining items. The following items were discussed in detail:

- All towns listed in HB 495 need formal notification that they are to designate their representative to the commission, and the town of Durham should be added
- In response to the discussion of expanding funding for Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) to improve coordination, Ms Czysz from Strafford County stated that the RPCs rely on competitive water quality grants from DES, and the limited funds that municipalities pay into the RPCs
- In response to the report recommendation to expand household hazardous waste disposal programs, it was agreed that there is still room for improvement. These programs are being conducted by municipalities in a variety of ways that run the gamut from towns paying to participate in the programs of neighboring towns to the city of Nashua conducting collection days 4 or 5 times a year. It was also pointed out that the costs of conducting these programs can be expensive and there's a relatively small amount of state grant money available to defray the cost
- The commission should consider sending a letter to our congressional delegation asking for their continued support to address emerging contaminants in our drinking water from the federal level
- The issue of interconnection between water systems continues to be a complicated issue. Compatibility to ensure quality and chemistry is a factor that must always be considered in combining water for daily use. Responses to emergencies are not generally a problem, but day-to-day use is more complicated. The point was made that water systems are probably better positioned to handle the issue of interconnection without involvement by the state and that there is a GIS tool available through the cooperative extension to assist
- Ms Lightbody pointed out that UNH is establishing a center to look at emerging contaminants that will be available to assist towns as they deal with the issues. The continuing need for education and communication came up as part of this discussion and throughout the review of the findings

Next meeting

The next meeting will be on March 27 and will feature a presentation on Emergency Management and Regionalization by DES.