

HB 495 Seacoast Drinking Water Commission
Discussion from Work Session
Aug 27, 2020

Commission Members present: Representative Pat Bushway (Chair), Representative Mike Edgar (Vice Chair), Sen Tom Sherman, Tim Roache, Mindi Messmer, Brandon Kernen, Jen Czysz, Brian Goetz, Dana Truslow, and Boyd Anderson (?).

Representative Bushway opened the meeting at 2:05 PM, presented the information pertaining to holding the meeting remotely, led the pledge of allegiance and the clerk took the roll. Several guests attended including Boyd Anderson from Water Matters (?), and additional representatives from the Department of Environmental Services (DES).

Note: As there was not a quorum for this session, no votes were taken, and it is considered a work session.

Representative Bushway opened the discussion with a review of legislation that did not get enacted in this session that might be of interest to the commission and perhaps should be considered for future legislation. The bills included:

- HB 1120 which deals with water tests for rental property
- HB 1347 which addresses impacts to other water users from new sources of water for community water systems
- HB 1274 which requires that bottled water be tested for the presence of certain chemicals
- HB 667-FN which requires that installers of new well pumps test the well water for certain contaminants
- SB 641-FN which requires testing for lead in water in schools and childcare facilities
- HB 1569-FN which requires DES to maintain a public registry of where fire suppressants that contain PFAS chemicals have been used

There was a discussion of some of the issues associated with the bills and it was pointed out that they generally had support but the truncated process due to COVID did not allow sufficient time for them to be fully vetted and considered.

Brandon Kieran from DES provided an update on the drought situation statewide and provided the latest statistics.

Brian Goetz of Portsmouth Public Works presented a briefing on Water Efficiency. He discussed efforts undertaken by the city of Portsmouth to incentivize efficient use of water. That included providing retrofit kits in older homes and rebates for the purchase of efficient washing machines and dishwashers (?). He talked about efforts on the part of the department to assist customers with identifying and fixing leaks and other sources of overuse. He talked about how they can monitor usage and identify problems remotely. He said people are generally receptive to their offers of help.

The attendees discussed the spreadsheet with the findings from the last commission and asked again for any comments or input. The chairperson explained that she would be using the unapproved minutes from earlier meetings to put together the report that is due Nov 1.

The attendees talked about topics for upcoming meetings and it was agreed that wetlands should be added as a discussion topic because of the important role they play in providing clean, adequate water sources. It could be an agenda item as early as the next meeting on Sep 24.