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The Honorable Kevin Avar, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
New Hampshire Senate
State House, Room 103
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Chairman Avar and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for accepting this testimony regarding House Bill 56, legislation to establish a formula for determining the distance for which a new landfill shall be located from a perennial river, lake, or coastal water. The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests supports this important bill.

One of New Hampshire's distinguishing traits is the State's deep natural beauty. This landscape, especially the forests and water resources, contributes to the environmental and economic health and well-being we enjoy. The protection and conservation of these natural areas is the result of a diverse partnership of public agencies, non-profit organizations and private citizens. We view the goal of this bill as a key part of the State's responsibility to steward these natural resources for the long-term public good of all the residents of New Hampshire. We wish to thank the bill's sponsors for their introduction and support of them.

Although our mission revolves around the health of our state's forests, one of our conservation priorities is the protection of water supply lands and important aquatic resources. With that goal in mind, we have been involved in efforts to protect critical water resources like the Merrimack River Watershed, the Great Bay Estuary and the Ammonoosuc River. Work like this helps to ensure the long-term viability of these water supplies but also benefits the wildlife that depends on aquatic ecosystems and the outdoor recreation sector of New Hampshire's economy.

We are especially supportive of HB 56's focus on limiting or prohibiting the siting of landfills within a defined distance of groundwater sources. Given the threats some communities across the state are facing to their local drinking water supplies from such problems as PFAS contamination, New Hampshire must prioritize policies that better protect these critical water resources. The passage of this bill will help our state meet this key stewardship responsibility.

For these reasons, we would encourage the Committee to pass HB 56. Thank you again for accepting this testimony.

Sincerely,

Matt Leahy, Public Policy Manager
Society for the Protection of NH Forests