



April 21, 2017

The Honorable Christopher T. Sununu
Governor of New Hampshire
State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Governor Sununu:

We are writing to share with you our thoughts on the critical qualities and skills needed by any nominee for Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Services (DES). As you consider potential nominees, we urge you to keep in mind the statutory requirements of the position, as well as the mission of the Department. We believe this process presents you the opportunity to highlight the important role the DES Commissioner plays in protecting the quality of life in our state.

The mission of DES is to “help sustain a high quality of life for all citizens by protecting and restoring the environment and public health in New Hampshire.” As the State’s chief environmental leader, the DES Commissioner is central to ensuring the Department meets all of its statutory obligations, and provides the necessary leadership on natural resource protection. The Commissioner needs to be able to communicate effectively with stakeholders within state government, with the business and conservation communities, with municipalities, as well as with New Hampshire residents and visitors.

The authorizing statute states that a successful candidate for this position is qualified by “reason of education and experience.” We believe that an effective DES Commissioner must come to the job with a keen understanding of environmental regulation and policy, as well as a working knowledge of the role and scope of the Department’s statutory functions, budget, and relationships with federal and other partners. Demonstrated management and leadership experience is also of value.

The DES Commissioner serves in important regional roles – representing New Hampshire in regional regulatory and planning forums, and through partnerships and agreements with our neighboring states’ executive agencies and the federal government. Being able to manage these

relationships, and bringing an understanding of the regulatory and environmental challenges facing the region and how they may impact New Hampshire residents, is an important aspect of this position.

We believe the ideal candidate must have a strong, demonstrated knowledge of the laws and policies that guide DES's work in protecting our natural resources and the public's health. The Department must continue to be committed to addressing the major environmental policy and natural resource management challenges facing our State today, including the need for sufficient and safe drinking water, the impacts of increased development pressure on the state's natural resources, proposed federal budget cuts, and the overarching problem of climate change.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts on this important nomination. We look forward to working with you, the Executive Council, and a new Commissioner of DES to further the protection of our State's natural resources and high quality of life.

Sincerely,

Susan Arnold
Vice President for Conservation
Appalachian Mountain Club

Douglas A. Bechtel
President
Audubon Society of New Hampshire

Will Abbott
Vice-President for Policy
Society for the Protection of NH Forests

Tom Irwin
Vice President & Director, CLF New Hampshire
Conservation Law Foundation

Tom O'Brien
President
NH Lakes Association

Barbara Richter
Executive Director
NH Association of Conservation Commissions

Mark Zankel
State Director
The Nature Conservancy-New Hampshire

Kate Epsen
Executive Director
NH Clean Tech Council-NHSEA