



NEW HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION
OF REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSIONS

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Lakes Region
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Nashua Regional
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North Country Council
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Rockingham
Planning Commission
156 Water Street
Exeter, NH 03833
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Southern NH
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438 Dubuque Street
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Southwest Region
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Strafford Regional
Planning Commission
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Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission
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February 1, 2016

Representative James Belanger, Chairman
House Municipal and County Government Committee
New Hampshire Legislative Office Building, Room 301
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1439 - requiring regional planning commissions to file an annual report.

Dear Representative Belanger and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions, I am writing to express our reservations regarding HB 1439, requiring regional planning commissions (RPCs) to compile specific documents as part of an annual report.

We have no objection to the idea that RPCs complete an annual report for our municipal members and the general public. As written, however, the bill specifies that the annual report include a "detailed summary of all grants received, including the terms and conditions of each agreement it or any related government entity entered into to receive such grant." Fulfilling this requirement would mean, in effect, that the annual report include the full contract and scope of every grant and contract an RPC had in place for that year. This would amount to several hundreds of pages copied and hours of time spent compiling 'the detailed summary' of the agreements and would result in substantial unfunded costs incurred by the regional planning agencies. All such agreements are public documents and available for public review to any interested party.

Further, we believe that the idea of preparing an annual report with conventional content intended for educational and reporting purposes has merit and should be encouraged. In fact, many RPCs already do prepare reports of this nature in some form or another. In addition, each commission already prepares audited financial statements annually which are adopted by their respective governing bodies and available for public review.

Our concerns about the bill can be remedied by changing the proposed addition to RSA 36:49 as follows: *"A regional planning commission shall prepare and make available to the public an annual report which shall include a summary of the activities of the agency and audited financial statement. ~~and a detailed summary of all grants received, including the terms and conditions of each agreement it or any related government entity entered into to receive such grant.~~"* We offer this as a friendly amendment and would be pleased to work with the bill's sponsor in this regard. Absent a change of this sort, we would ask that you determine this bill inexpedient to legislate.

Thank you for the opportunity comment. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you or your Committee members have questions.

Sincerely,

Glenn G. Coppelman
Chairman