

RPC LEGISLATIVE POLICY

(Approved by the RPC Executive Committee on October 23, 2019)

Mission Statement Summary

1. Maintain professional expertise in the following areas: municipal and regional land use planning, natural and cultural resources, conservation, regional transportation planning, coastal resource management, economic development, and graphic information system development;
2. Maintain support for commissioner engagement and for education and outreach to help communities achieve sound planning and resource stewardship.

RPC Legislative Policy

Each year the RPC's Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) reviews proposed legislation throughout each Legislative Session (typically January through June). The RPC Legislative Policy as approved by the RPC Executive Committee gives guidance to the LPC.

The LPC looks at the list of proposed legislation (Legislative Service Requests or LSRs) and then narrows the total list of LSRs, typically from 800 to 1200, down to a much smaller list of LSRs that could potentially have an impact on the ability of the RPC to carry out its mission. This list starts out as a much more manageable list of 100 to 150. After review of the actual bill language and with input from other organizations that also track legislation, the list is further narrowed to 50 to 70 LSRs. Applying further prioritization, the list that the LPC will focus on gets narrowed to 20 to 30 LSRs/bills. The LPC then recommends an action for each piece of legislation in prioritized list regarding a subject that may have an impact, either positive or negative, on supporting the RPC mission. Recommended actions include "Watch", "Support", or "Oppose". If there is strong support or opposition for a particular piece of legislation then a letter may be submitted to the appropriate House or Senate committee chair or to all members of the committee. Providing testimony at committee public hearings may also accompany some of the letters.

The LPC will review legislation regarding the following topics:

Agriculture

1. Legislation that will support and preserve agricultural lands and livestock;
2. Legislation that will promote locally grown food and beverages;
3. Legislation that will balance agricultural and agritourism uses with local regulations.

Boards & Commissions

1. Legislation that will make changes to procedures used by local boards and planning commissions.
2. Legislation that will change the jurisdictions of local boards and planning commissions.
3. Legislation that will clarify or strengthen procedures associated with developments of regional impact.

Energy

1. Legislation that will make improvements in energy conservation and efficiency.
2. Legislation that will support and/or enhance the RGGI and other programs such as the New Hampshire CORE energy efficiency program (“NHSaves”).
3. Legislation that will support and advocate for renewable/alternate energy resources including solar, offshore and terrestrial winds, hydro-electric, biomass, thermal, and tidal energy.
4. Legislation that will support electric grid modernization including consumer and municipal access to new technologies, alternative renewable energy sources, as well as fuel diversities.
5. Legislation that will allow micro-grids and supports expansion of net metering.

Environment

1. Legislation that will provide support for coastal communities to mitigate the effects of sea level rise, storm surge, and other coastal risks;
2. Legislation that will enable and assist municipalities to address climate adaptation strategies by increasing the resiliency of new and existing infrastructure;
3. Legislation that will improve water quality and quantity statewide including setting drinking water standards for emerging contaminants;
4. Legislation that will support the Clean Air Act and define the impacts air pollution may have on groundwater;
5. Legislation that will cost-effectively transfer the responsibility of stormwater regulations (MS4) from the EPA to the NHDES;
6. Legislation that will provide for permanent LCHIP funding that meets the intent of the original purpose of LCHIP;
7. Legislation that will protect wetlands and shorelines.

Housing

1. Legislation that will support housing needs for all ages and income levels;
2. Legislation that will address short-term rental;
3. Legislation that will address the infrastructure improvements required with additional housing.

Land Use

1. Legislation that will create incentives and help municipalities to adopt land use policies that discourage urban sprawl, retain open space and conservation lands, support local agriculture and forestry, and/or preserve community character.
2. Legislation that will assist municipalities in their effort to preserve and manage historical and cultural resources.

Municipal Concerns

1. Legislation that will foster cooperation between two or more municipalities in developing or maintaining shared services and/or infrastructure;
2. Legislation that maintains existing state support for economic development initiatives through tax credit programs and expand outreach and marketing to attract new businesses to New Hampshire communities;
3. Legislation that assists municipalities, school districts, water/wastewater districts and other political subdivisions with broadband technology and communications equipment installation and upgrades;
4. Legislation that supports expansion of public/private targeted labor force training programs such as the Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships in Education (AMPed) established by the NH Community College System;
5. Legislation that supports broadband internet service by allowing municipalities to provide access to service by building broadband infrastructure and authorizing use of municipal bonds for such purpose and by removing artificial barriers to competition;
6. Legislation that fully funds state aid and loan programs for municipal water and sewer upgrades and expansions, including the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF); State Aid Grant (SAG) for Water Pollution Control at levels necessary to fund prior commitments and ongoing annual needs.
7. Legislation that will support and encourage the use of Public Private Partnerships to aid in infrastructure improvements or preserve historical, cultural, and conservation resources.

Right-To-Know

1. Legislation that will provide reasonable public access to public records but allows municipalities to recover their costs in producing the requested information.

Transportation

1. Legislation that supports the implementation of a multi-modal transportation network;
2. Legislation that supports "Complete Streets" policies and/or clarifies the responsibility and liability for sidewalk maintenance;
3. Legislation that enhances revenues to expand and maintain the transportation network, especially public transportation;
4. Legislation that raises the cap on the local option registration fees for use for local transportation projects;
5. Legislation that enhances revenues for public transportation and does not transfer federal monies from programs such as TAP and CMAQ to highways only;

6. Legislation that enhances the implementation of the State Trails plan;
7. Legislation that makes transportation planning more efficient (10-Year Plan, STIP & TIP, State and Regional Long-Range Transportation Plans.
8. Legislation that implements recommendations from the State Rail Plan and the State Freight Plan upon its completion.