



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

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Written Testimony regarding HB 352
State Aid Grants for Wastewater Projects
January 17, 2019

Brian Goetz
Director of Public Works
City of Portsmouth

My name is Brian Goetz and I am the Deputy Director of Public Works for the City of Portsmouth. In that capacity I am in charge of the City's water-wastewater and stormwater systems and have been intimately involved with the infrastructure improvement programs throughout the City and region. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the City that supports HB 352.

Since 1997, the City has committed millions of dollars toward sewer system upgrades, including our current effort to upgrade our Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Facility. To accomplish all of this work, the City has relied on State Revolving Fund loans and State Aid Grants for financing.

The City of Portsmouth has been proactively committed to not only meet increasingly stringent regulatory guidelines for their water and wastewater system but to also replace aging infrastructure on a programmed basis. This commitment continues. Our proposed six-year capital improvement plan includes \$28 million for sewer system infrastructure and treatment improvements. This is in addition to the funds totaling nearly \$100 million that have been committed to our Peirce Island upgrade. This will lead to continued customer rate increases. Again, as with our capital planning, the City has been proactive with increasing water and sewer rates in anticipation of these projects to avoid rate shock. Even with that, the City sewer's rates will see an approximately four percent annual rate increase for the foreseeable future to bond and pay for these projects. Any state of federal assistance will help offset these increases.

These improvements, past and present, benefit not just the citizens of Portsmouth but importantly, the waters of the State of New Hampshire. Many of these projects are required to meet regulatory requirements mandated by the State Department of Environmental Services and the EPA. The City of Portsmouth, along with many other communities in the State, particularly those in the Great Bay estuary who are facing significant upgrades, support the State appropriating funds for SAG programs.

Therefore, the City wholeheartedly supports House Bill 352.