



State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF PARKS & RECREATION

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February 11, 2025

The Honorable James Gray, Chairman
and the Senate Finance Committee
State House, Room 103
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RE: SB 241-FN-A relative to construction of a public pier on Hampton Beach and making an appropriation therefor.

Dear Chairman Gray and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources ("Department"), Division of Parks and Recreation ("Division") regarding SB 241 relative to construction of a public pier on Hampton Beach and making an appropriation therefor.

The Division of Parks and Recreation completed the [Hampton Beach State Park Accessibility Feasibility Study](#) at the end of October 2024. This study was funded by an appropriation in the FY 2024-2025 budget (Chapter 79 of the Laws of 2023, p.132, lines 11-22) to conduct a study to improve accessibility for people with disabilities at Hampton Beach State Park. The study includes recommended locations and specific options for improving outdoor accessibility, including but not limited to, the construction of an accessible walking pier.

A study committee of community stakeholders assisted the division in assessing the park facilities, gathering public input and collating recommendations. An improvement options matrix lists over 50 recommendations in 6 categories including:

- Information Transparency
- Transportation and Parking
- Wayfinding
- Facilities and Events
- Outdoor Adaptive Equipment
- Policy & Regulation

Improvement options were evaluated across implementation categories including:

- Accessibility Goal (compliant, proactive, innovative)
- Cost
- Public Support
- Environmental Impact
- Connectivity with Other Improvements

What the division learned from the study is that there are many low-cost/no-cost improvements that can be implemented to improve information and wayfinding, beach and event access, and management

improvements within our operating budget and we are working towards implementing those recommendations.

The pier proposal, as assessed in the options matrix as an accessibility improvement, is described as a proactive/innovative project that is high cost with moderate public support that has physical environmental impact and moderate connection with other facilities.

Other moderate/high cost improvements that may require capital or general funds to implement include dune crossing structures or mats, converting beach access stairs to ramps, expansion of beach access mats, sensory friendly playground, accessible fishing platforms, shade shelters and refuge areas, site lighting improvements and transportation improvements. These strategies can be implemented throughout the park providing universal access to all park facilities, especially the beach, rather than a single point of access over the water.

As provided in testimony on SB 122-FN in 2023, “a pier may provide for an additional attraction that could increase visitation. However, as outlined in the pier feasibility study, further discussion is needed regarding ownership and partnership interests and responsibilities to move the project forward.” The testimony also references “ongoing operating costs, including repair and maintenance over the lifespan of the pier” which is important because of the impact of winter storms on our seacoast facilities.

The proposed appropriation is less than half of estimates to construct the pier and does not account for operating expenses. Raising the remaining funds to implement the project through additional appropriations, gifts, grants and bequests requires a level of management that is not in the department’s capacity and is better suited for private sector or community fundraising.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB241. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Wilson
Director

C: Sarah L. Stewart, Commissioner, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources