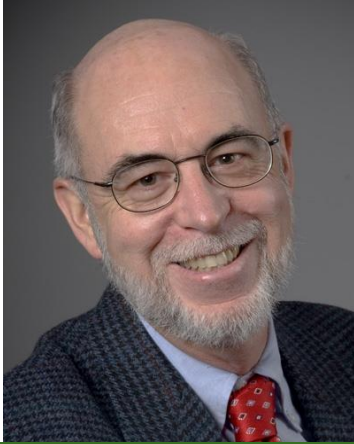


Senator David H. Watters

Representing Senate District 4: Barrington, Dover, Rollinsford, Somersworth

September 11, 2013



Dear Constituents,

After a welcome break at the conclusion of the legislative session in June, Senate work continues in the summer months with constituent service, committee and commission meetings, bill signings, and preparation of new legislation. I will report during the filing period which opens on September 30 on new initiatives, but I wanted to catch up with you on some key environmental developments as well as a major effort on transportation needs. As always, please email or call if you have comments about the Newsletter or want to talk about legislation to file. For those, like me, marking the start of a new school year, I extend best wishes for this time of renewal, new ideas, and hope for the success of the next generation.

Policy Committee Assignments:

Transportation

Executive Departments &
Administration

Statutory & Study Committee Assignments:

Coastal Risk and Hazards
Commission

Commission on Housing Policy and
Regulation

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
Commission

State Suggestion & Extraordinary
Service Award Evaluation
Committee

County-State Finance Commission

NH Conservation Number Plate
Advisory Committee

Administrative Rules (JLCAR)

Joint Legislative Historical
Committee

Board of Claims

Sen. Watters Honored for Work to Save Loons

At Swains Lake in Barrington, I received an award from Sheridan Brown, Legislative Coordinator for the Loon Preservation Committee and Harry Vogel, Senior Biologist and Executive Director, for cosponsoring Senate Bill 89. Loon mortality is linked to ingestion of lead fishing tackle, so this bill added jigs weighing less than an ounce to the prohibition of sinkers in a 2007 law. Having worked on this issue as a member of the House Fish and Game Committee, I supported this bill to take the next step to preserve New Hampshire loons, especially since they have important habitat and nesting sites on Swains Lake and Mendum's Pond.



Photo by Ryan McBride, Foster's Daily Democrat.

33 North State Street

Concord, NH 03301

Legislative Office Building Room 101-A

David.Watters@leg.state.nh.us

(603) 271-8567



Sen. Watters Visits Capitol Hill to Promote the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

During recent meetings of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, I visited the offices of Sens. Shaheen and Ayotte and Rep. Shea Porter to advocate for fishery management work that benefits New Hampshire sport fishing and commercial fishing. The other New Hampshire Commissioners, Doug Grout and Ritchie White and I explained to New Hampshire delegation staff the importance of the work of the Commission to sustain fisheries by conducting scientific work and managing the catch of inshore species such as lobster, shrimp, striped bass, herring, alewives, and menhaden. We also advocated changes in the Magnuson-Stevens Act to allow more flexibility in setting catch limits to help the fishing fleet.

Sen. Watters' Landmark Environmental Legislation Signed by Governor Hassan



In a signing ceremony at the Seacoast Science Center on August 21, Governor Hassan signed my Senate Bills 163 and 164 creating landmark environmental laws. The Coastal Risk and Hazards Commission, established by Senate Bill 163, will recommend legislation to prepare for projected sea level rise and other coastal and coastal watershed hazards such as storms, increased river flooding, and storm water runoff, and the risks such hazards pose to municipalities and state assets in New Hampshire.

Governor Hassan noted the importance of the coast to our economy, tourism, and quality of life, and she emphasized the resilience of New Hampshire people in facing challenges that may come with climate change. In my remarks, I called for New Hampshire solutions forged by cooperation among communities in the seacoast and Great Bay region, state agencies, and other public and private stakeholders: “This historic legislation will mean that New Hampshire people can plan wisely to reduce financial burdens on taxpayers and to ensure that a beautiful and economically viable coast will be enjoyed by future generations.”

Governor Hassan also signed Senate Bill 164 which enables municipalities to use projected sea-level rise in coastal hazards provisions in master planning. This law gives seacoast and Great Bay communities the tool they need now to plan wisely for future inundation when determining zoning and building regulations. Many, many individuals helped in the passage of these bills, and I especially want to thank the members of the Coastal Adaptation Workgroup which has supported local officials in their efforts to prepare communities for climate change.

Transportation: District 4 on the Road to Economic Development and Prosperity

The Seacoast area has benefitted greatly from the creation of a modern, intermodal transportation system of local roads, turnpike and highway, major bridges, and bus and rail transit. These are links in a chain forged by economic development planning and wise legislation. District 4's communities of Barrington, Dover, Rollinsford and Somersworth will continue on the road to prosperity if we meet the challenges and opportunities facing our transportation system. In passing a landmark, bipartisan budget, all agreed that transportation was the unfinished business.

The revision of the 10-yr. highway plan this fall is the vehicle for leadership on addressing the District's transportation needs. As your senator, I am working to bring the business community and public officials together to make the case for Rte. 108 Corridor improvements and for an Exit 10 on the Spaulding Turnpike to the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT), which is composed of the five Executive Councilors and the Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

As documented by the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, we have known since a 2003 NHDOT study that economic development and traffic safety depend on upgrading the Route 108 corridor in Somersworth and creating an Exit 10 on the Spaulding Turnpike. The Route 108 corridor has seen job-creating development from Velcro International, NH Works, and Contitech to the new Albany International and Safran Aerospace expansion in Rochester. Vibrant healthcare and fitness facilities, including the Goodwin Community Health Center, Frisbee Memorial Hospital, Wentworth-Douglass & Affiliates, and the Works, have increased employment and provided needed services. Statistics show increasing traffic, congestion, and accidents along the corridor and at major intersections. What was once a commuter corridor now needs turning lanes, areas for COAST transit stops, since its Route 2 carries the largest ridership in the system, and other traffic improvements. The 10-year plan must include projects to sustain growth and safe travel in District 4.

Improvements to the Rte. 108 Corridor are linked to the creation of Exit 10, not only to relieve traffic flow on High Street and Rte. 108, but also to support access to the Rochester Airport area and Somersworth's industrial parks. We cannot strangle economic development in the Somersworth/Dover area after the completion of the Little Bay Bridges and the turnpike widening in Rochester. Since 2000, Strafford County's population has been the fastest growing in the state, and the region is poised for a new era of economic growth and prosperity—if we have the transportation system we need.

Transportation for District 4 is my top priority for the second year of this term. I have been in close consultation with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, officials in Somersworth, Commissioner Clement of NHDOT, Executive Councilor Van Ostern, the Governor's office, and fellow senators and state representatives to argue forcefully for these projects. I will fight tirelessly for their inclusion in the 10-Year Highway as drafted by GACIT and when considered by the legislature. The Rte. 108 Corridor improvements will be an immediate benefit for the District, and the case for Exit 10 will be made through presentations and testimony at the GACIT hearing which Councilor Van Ostern has agreed to schedule in Somersworth's City Hall on September 18 at 4:30 p.m. I urge the public to attend the hearing and to submit testimony.

Leadership on transportation issues in the state senate also requires work on providing resources. Commissioner Clement has documented the state's deteriorating roads and bridges. There soon will be major reductions in the NHDOT workforce, fewer roads paved, and more red-listed bridges, and property taxes will bear more of the burden of fixing local roads. Work will stop on the I-93 corridor, and we may see a suspension of work on the Dover Point bridges in 2015. Funding for the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge will be jeopardized. As a member of the Senate Transportation Committee, I am working with other senators on creative and forward-looking funding plans to introduce in the next session. I am particularly interested in legislation to increase Betterment funds for municipal roads and bridges.

We cannot attract businesses, get people to work safely and efficiently, and maintain our quality of life without a safe and modern transportation system. As your senator, I will work to keep District 4 on the road to prosperity.