

Contact:

Jasen Stock
Executive Director, NHTOA
(603) 224-9699
(603) 674-8148, cell

New Hampshire Tells Legislature: Override the Sununu Energy Vetoes

Thousands of Granite Staters Sign Petition In Support of SB 365/SB 446, Urging Lawmakers to Override Vetoes of Popular Bills

SEPTEMBER 12, 2018 -- Earlier today, representatives from the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association (NHTOA), New Hampshire Sustainable Energy Association (NHSEA), and the Granite State Hydropower Association (GHSA) presented the N.H. Speaker of the House and N.H. Senate President with hundreds of petitions containing more than 6,500 signatures from more than 200 towns urging the N.H. House and Senate to override the vetoes by Gov. Chris Sununu of Senate bills 365 and 446. The Legislature will vote on Thursday, September 13, whether to override the vetoes.



Tom Thomson, center, delivers hundreds of petitions containing more than 6,500 signatures to Rebecca Stuart, secretary to Speaker of the N.H. House Gene Chandler, while Jasen Stock, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association, looks on.

The petition drive is one of the largest veto-override petition drives in New Hampshire history. The drive gathered a total 6,508 signatures from N.H. residents in 201 different towns.

“These petitions come from every region in the state and from our smallest rural communities to our largest cities,” said Tom Thomson, Tree Farmer and son of former N.H. Governor Meldrim Thomson. “This is a statewide issue and clearly the people of New

Hampshire want these bills, both of which passed the House and Senate with overwhelming bipartisan majorities, to become law so that we can continue to manage healthy forests while expanding renewable energy opportunities for New Hampshire's businesses and municipalities.”

Both bills focus on renewable energy. SB 365 provides a three-year bridge for New Hampshire's six independent biomass power plants (who burn woodchip to create electricity). This will allow the Governor's Office of Strategic Initiatives to complete its legislatively mandated biomass study (per SB 517, passed last year).

SB 446 increases the allowable size of an electric generation project that a business, school, or municipality can use to self-generate power (aka “net meter”) to 5 megawatts and sets the electricity sale and purchase pricing to avoid cost-shifting. This allows more businesses and municipalities to tackle the issue of high electric rates on their own. Self-generation projects may use small hydro, solar, or even biomass. This will help N.H. businesses stay competitive.

“The Governor's statement that biomass represents ‘a manageable 3.5% dip in revenue’ is untrue and misleading,” Thomson added. “In fact, for many timber harvesting companies biomass represents between 40 and 50 percent of their revenue. And without the market for woodchips that the biomass energy plants provide, for many landowners sustainable forest management is economically impossible.”

Thomson, who owns and manages more than 2,000 acres of woodlands in the Orford, N.H., region, also noted that the petitions have been signed not just by those in the timber industry and landowners, but also by hundreds of people in New Hampshire's recreation industry, which would be severely impacted if landowners close their property to public recreation as a result of the vetoes.

“We really see SB 446 as a huge opportunity for businesses and municipalities to save on their electric bills. And the investment in small renewables would drive economic activity, support jobs, and increase state and local tax revenues, all while avoiding subsidies and cost-shifting,” said GHSA Co-President Bob King. “I can't emphasize that last point enough - SB 446 avoids subsidies and cost-shifting, and it appears the Governor failed to appreciate that critical fact. The Legislature got it right the first time with SB 446, and this petition drive shows the strong widespread support for overriding the Governor's vetoes on both bills.”

About the NHTOA

Founded in 1911, the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association is a non-profit statewide coalition of landowners, forest industry professionals, government officials and supporters who

work together to promote better forest management, conserve our working forests and ensure a strong forest products industry.

The NHTOA strives to conserve New Hampshire's working forests for future generations through public and industry education, legislative advocacy, outreach and cooperation within the forest community.

About the NHSEA

Established in 2003, the New Hampshire Sustainable Energy Association is a statewide non-profit, member-based organization. NHSEA's mission is to strengthen New Hampshire's economy and conserve natural resources by promoting a transition to clean, efficient, and renewable energy. NHSEA sees a future for NH that empowers the people of our state to generate, use, and benefit, both economically and environmentally, from, renewable energy and maximum efficiency. NHSEA is the leading advocate for advancing the state's clean energy economy.

About the GSHA

The Granite State Hydropower Association is a voluntary, non-profit trade association of the small-scale independent hydropower industry in New Hampshire. Members own, operate and manage more than 60 hydroelectric facilities located throughout the state, totaling around 50 megawatts. These small businesses collectively generate about 215 million kilowatt hours annually – enough to power 24,000 homes for one year. For more information, visit www.granitestatehydro.org.