

Amendment to SB 185-FN-A

1 Amend the title of the bill by replacing it with the following:

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3 AN ACT relative to development of the New Hampshire state rail trails plan by the  
4 department of transportation and making an appropriation therefor.  
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6 Amend the bill by replacing sections 1 and 2 with the following:

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8 1 Statement of Purpose. The state of New Hampshire owns 500 miles of rail corridors. Use of  
9 these trails for biking and non-motorized recreation provides valuable low-impact uses. This act  
10 requires the development of a plan for the state rail-trail system to ensure the preservation and  
11 integrity of these assets and to provide direction for future development. In addition to defining the  
12 role of the department of transportation in preservation of rail corridors, the plan will determine  
13 the best way to maximize the return on investment from, and leverage future investment in, the  
14 state's rail corridor assets. Additionally, this plan will determine how to engage towns, cities, and  
15 private rail-trail organizations in these efforts.

16 2 New Sections; New Hampshire State Rail Trails Plan; Advisory Committee. Amend RSA 21-L  
17 by inserting after section 12-b the following new sections:

18 21-L:12-c New Hampshire State Rail Trails Plan. The department of transportation shall  
19 update the 2005 state trails plan and document the best means to maintain and develop state-  
20 owned rail trail corridors. The updated plan shall be entitled the state rail trails plan and shall be  
21 completed on or before June 30, 2021. In developing the state rail trails plan, the department of  
22 transportation shall:

23 I. Update the 2005 rail corridor inventory through state records, statewide trail  
24 organizations, and regional planning commissions, including, by trail, the funding sources, and  
25 permitted uses.

26 II. Hire a qualified consulting firm to complete and disseminate the plan.

27 III. Include a statewide economic-impact analysis on the value of rail trails.

28 IV. Consider maintenance and cost of maintenance for rail trails, including state  
29 responsibility for the underlying structural integrity of abandoned rail corridors, while permitting  
30 trail organizations and towns to perform routine maintenance of trail surfaces and other amenities.

31 V. Establish a tier system for prioritizing state investments in rail trail projects, based on  
32 criteria such as geography, connectivity to other rail trails, proximity to population centers and  
33 natural attractions, and other criteria as deemed appropriate.

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1           VI. Develop recommendations for a state funding mechanism to support rail trail projects  
2 and the management structure of such funds.

3           VII. Develop a template trail management agreement outlining responsibilities of state,  
4 local, and private organizations involved with management of state-owned trails.

5           VIII. Compile and maintain a list of trail organizations and the areas of the state each  
6 serves.

7           IX. Identify best practices for acquiring insurance for volunteer trail management groups.

8           X. Document state commitment and support for the development of rail trails for their  
9 transportation, recreation, tourism, and other economic value.

10          XI. Determine how to ensure the integrity of publicly owned rail trail corridors. This may  
11 include reestablishing property lines with abutting private property owners.

12          XII. Hold a minimum of 3 public hearings, each in a different area of the state, to solicit  
13 public comment to shape the plan and make the final plan available on the department of  
14 transportation website.

15          XIII. Provide a pamphlet at state information centers regarding the state trails plan.

16          21-L:12-d Rail Trail Advisory Stakeholders Committee. The department of transportation shall  
17 establish a rail trail advisory stakeholders committee to advise the department in the development  
18 of the state rail trails plan under RSA 21-L:12-c.

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AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill directs the department of transportation to develop a New Hampshire state rail trails plan based in part on the 2005 state trails plan, and makes an appropriation to the department for this purpose.