



The Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire, Inc.

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DES Proposed Stream Crossing Rules

Presented to the House Public Works & Highways Committee
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I would like to state that the Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire (AGC of NH) has taken considerable time reviewing and discussing the proposed rules. The rule changes are long and not easy to follow, however, after having a discussion with our Board of Directors last week, it became necessary for the Association to comment on this issue.

These proposed rules place requirements on stream crossings that will result in significantly higher costs. State, local municipalities, developers, and residents will be required on all culverts that cross intermittent streams, or have a drainage watershed area of 25 acres or more to have an engineering analysis performed. This means that in cases where a drainage area only has occasional flow, a technical analysis will need to be done by a professional. The typical cost of an analysis is \$5,000 or greater depending on the size of the site.

This cost would be in addition to the installation of an open box culvert the proposed rules require. An open box culvert costs much more than the traditional round or box culvert because of the added expense of digging down further, placing a footing, and requiring more man hours. Contractors have informed me that installing an open box culvert will cost 6 times more than what it costs to install a round or box culvert. In addition to the monetary costs, there is the potential to dramatically slow the economic recovery of the private sector.

The rules require the installation of an open box culvert to mitigate impacts to the aquatic life in the streams. However, the Association questions whether the environmental cost benefit justifies these changes. Does the environmental benefit significantly outweigh the thousands of dollars that will be spent on every stream crossing; even when there is the potential that significant aquatic life may not reside there?

The Association believes that mandating every stream crossing be subject to these rules is unreasonable; this includes the exemption process. It would be better to offer more prescriptive rules that detail when an engineering analysis or open box culvert is needed. The Association hopes the House Public Works and Highways Committee will continue to work with DES to revise rules so that they will not impact the economy in such a large way, and become more practical, whether being applied to public or private projects.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Executive Vice President