



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

March 12, 2014

Sara Cleaves
Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire
107 Nesmith Hall, 131 Main Street
Durham, NH 03824

Re. Support for STARS Innovation Credit

Dear Ms. Cleaves:

It is my pleasure to provide this letter of affirmation for the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) Innovation Credit for the University of New Hampshire. UNH and the Town of Durham are taking a truly innovative approach to water quality compliance through their Oyster River Integrated Watershed Plan.

As Administrator of the Watershed Management Bureau at the NH Department of Environmental Services, my primary responsibility is to ensure that the surface waters of the state meet water quality standards. One area of concern has been the quality of the Great Bay estuary. The University sits close to the shores of Great Bay. The Great Bay Estuary is a national treasure and a valuable resource to New Hampshire. The estuary provides food and shelter for a diversity of animals and plants that serve as building blocks for the ocean ecosystem. Great Bay has been federally designated as one of only 28 "estuaries of national significance" and serves as a national research reserve.

For many years, concern has been growing about the health of Great Bay. The actions by UNH and the Town of Durham to reduce pollution to the estuary are critical to the long-term viability of the ecosystem. They have taken a proactive approach which is unique in New Hampshire and perhaps in the nation. Absent of permit conditions or legal action, UNH and Durham have heavily invested in an interactive process of determining the best ways to reduce their "pollution footprint." They have engaged many local experts, cutting edge sampling equipment, high-tech modeling, and ingenious thinking to create an approach which will allow for the optimization of pollution reduction activities and technologies.

The project may well result in the first fully integrated NPDES permit in the country. At a recent meeting with EPA, the Federal agency representatives confirmed that this approach is unique and enthusiastically encouraged the town and UNH to keep moving in this direction.

I highly recommend that UNH and Durham be recognized for their visionary approach and believe that the Innovation Credit is well-deserved. Please feel free to contact me at 603-271-3289 should you have any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,


Ted Diers, Administrator
Watershed Management Bureau