



New Hampshire Tax Collectors' Association

March 5, 2019

The Honorable Clyde Carson, Chairman
House of Representatives – Municipal and County Government
Legislative Office Building, Room 301
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 409, AN ACT relative to the maximum optional fee for transportation improvements charged by municipalities when collecting motor vehicle registration fees.

Dear Chairman Carson and Committee Members:

My name is Becky Benvenuti, Revenue Administrator & Tax Collector for the City of Portsmouth. I am here today representing the City of Portsmouth as well as the New Hampshire Tax Collectors' Association. We respectfully ask you to vote in favor of HB 409.

In the past 20 years, the need for transportation improvements in our roads and bridges, the need to develop modern public transportation options for our seniors as well as to attract a younger workforce who want to live in places where they don't have to drive everywhere, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, has increased dramatically. Beginning in 1997 New Hampshire communities were given the ability to enact an optional vehicle registration fee to be deposited into a municipal transportation improvement capital reserve fund to help fund these capital improvements. Without our state providing an operating support for transit, municipalities are left to provide the necessary *local* match for federal funds. Passage of HB 409 helps municipalities by providing the ability to raise *local* dollars for *local* projects approved by the *local* legislative body of each municipality that assess this fee. This bill is not a 'tax increase', but rather supports local taxpayers controlling their financial planning for municipal and transportation capital improvements.

The City of Portsmouth is currently able to collect approximately \$112,000 annually, which is capped at the \$5 maximum fee. This bill would not automatically raise the fee of registering motor vehicles, but it would provide the City with the local option and power to consider possible future fee increases to fund the far greater capital costs associated with a long list of planned improvements to its public transit services, parking facilities, bridge improvements and bicycle paths. With growing increased demand on local funding, this is one option municipalities can use to continue to invest in their financial future.

We respectfully request that you vote in favor of HB 409.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Becky Benvenuti", written in a cursive style.

Becky I. Benvenuti
Revenue Administrator, City of Portsmouth
Chair, NHTCA Legislative Committee