



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Municipal Complex
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801
mayor@cityofportsmouth.com
(603) 610-7200

Deaglan McEachern
Mayor

January 24, 2022

Chairman Bob Giuda
State House
Senate Ways and Means Committee
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Re: The City of Portsmouth's written testimony in support of SB 437

Chairman Giuda and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 437, a bill that would increase the maximum vehicle registration fee a municipality can charge for transportation improvements from \$5 to \$15. Increasing this fee would give municipalities an additional source of revenue to fund much-needed transportation improvements for their community. Having a well-constructed, reliable and efficient multi-modal transportation systems is vital, not only for the well-being of the citizens of Portsmouth, but for our entire state. People who work and visit our state use our transportation systems to get here. These workers and tourists help fund the meals and rooms tax that supports not only the state, but every community in the state through the distribution of the meals and rooms tax revenue. The increase in the vehicle registration fee is a small burden on the taxpayer compared to the larger benefit derived by an improved transportation system funded from this revenue source.

The City also supports a means of offsetting the downshifting of costs previously paid by the State; local taxpayers have had to absorb these costs through the property tax. This burden is exacerbated by the Legislature's refusal to pass legislation that permits municipalities to raise additional sources of revenue to lessen the burden on the property tax. RSA 261:153, VI (b) is one of the few state laws that gives municipalities the ability to raise much-needed revenue outside the property tax to fund government services, such as transportation improvements. SB 437, if passed, would give municipalities an additional source of revenue for these transportation improvements, lessen the burden on the property tax, improve quality of life of our residents, workers and tourists and provide an improved transportation system that fuels our state and local economy.

For the reasons set forth above, I urge this Committee to vote SB 437 Ought to Pass. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Deaglan McEachern, Mayor of City of Portsmouth

c: Portsmouth City Council
Portsmouth Legislative Delegates
Karen Conard, City Manager