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Senate Rejects Unreliable LCHIP Funding Legislation

CONCORD - Today the Senate rejected SB 617, prime sponsored by Senator Starr, which aimed to expand funding for the land and community heritage investment program (LCHIP), however, its reliance on a voluntary surcharge would not have produced consistent, reliable funding for the program.

After the vote, Senator Martha Fuller Clark (D-Portsmouth) issued the following statement:

“Preserving New Hampshire’s historical and natural beauty is of critical importance to all of us. The Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) has provided assistance to communities and non-profit organizations throughout the state in their conservation and preservation efforts dating back to 2002. Requests for support from LCHIP continue to increase and their current funding cannot meet the demand. At the same time costs of preserving lands and investing in our historical sites and properties is becoming more and more expensive. While volunteer dollars could add much needed funding, this is not a workable long term solution as there is no way to predict how much money will be available from month to month, year to year. Nothing prevents anyone from making a voluntary contribution to LCHIP right now but the success of LCHIP can only occur with the ability to set a budget based on predictable and consistent funding.

An alternative bill which I have proposed, SB 493, would provide sustainable increased funding and I look forward to working with the sponsors on this long term funding solution.”

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