

**Letter to the Editor printed in Portsmouth Herald printed in September 2009,
regarding the Hatch Shell at Hampton Beach.**

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to the recent “letter to the editor” published in the Portsmouth Herald criticizing the capital expenditure of \$14.5 million by the State of New Hampshire on a new Hatch Shell complex at Hampton Beach State Park.

The 2009 Capital Budget was written with bi-partisan cooperation and passed by acclamation in both the House and Senate. The capital budget emphasized critical repairs, renovations and construction projects that could be completed within the next two years. It bonds over \$150 million in new construction projects in all 10 counties and in over 20 different communities throughout the State. The result of this new construction is, in fact, a \$150 million state-generated stimulus package that meets critical state capital construction needs, and maximizes the capture and expenditure of federal dollars. (By comparison, the recent Federal Stimulus Program allocated \$129 million to New Hampshire for road and bridge work.)

Primarily, the Legislature funded construction projects that either reduced state operating expenditures *or* paid for themselves in additional revenue. The Hampton “Sea Shell” project is in the latter category. An updated study showed that the new complex will generate an additional \$2.6 million annually in *direct* state tax revenue, which does not include liquor and lottery sales, or the very significant local economic impact. That’s a 5 to 6 year payback.

New Hampshire’s State Parks are its crown jewels; celebrating our State’s natural resources and diverse beauty. They belong to all of our residents and help to fuel tourism and the State’s economy. Nevertheless, until the 6.5 million dollar expenditure in the 2007 Capital Budget, the last time State capital money was spent on our State Parks was 1963!

Hampton Beach is the brightest jewel of the NH State Park system; generating more tourism and revenue than any other Park. The new Sea Shell complex follows a design resulting from a comprehensive masterplan. The bonding and expenditure of the \$14.5 million is a prudent investment by the State into its premier State Park and into the State and Seacoast economies.

Rep. David B. Campbell
Nashua
*Vice-Chairman, Public Works
& Highways Committee*