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New Hampshire Liquor Commission

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Christopher T. Sununu
Governor

August 22, 2022

His Excellency Governor Christopher T. Sununu
and the Honorable Executive Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 94:1-a Salaries Established and RSA 94:6, New Appointments, the Liquor Commission respectfully requests authorization to establish an entrance salary of Grade GG, Step 6, salary of \$105,482.00 for James Vara to serve as the Chief Operating Officer/Director for the Division of Administration (Position 9U574) effective September 9, 2022. **Funding 100% Liquor Funds.**

EXPLANATION

Pursuant to RSA 176:8 the unclassified position of Director for the Division of Administration shall be nominated by the commissioner for appointment by the governor with the consent of the council.

I respectfully nominate James Vara to be appointed to Director for the Division of Administration. The Director of Administration is responsible to provide direction to the entire operation of the NH Liquor Commission to optimize revenue and create maximum value for the citizens of the State of NH. The Director will ensure that the duties assigned and performed are in accordance with legislative intent, state and federal laws, and generally accepted accounting procedures. The Director is further responsible to provide exceptional leadership to personnel while supporting the NH Liquor Commissions' mission, vision, and values based upon excellence, competence, collaboration, innovation, respect, personalization, commitment, and accountability.

Mr. Vara possesses the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities that are essential to the Director for the Division of Administration, which necessitates this request. Mr. Vara is

presently the Chief Legal Counsel for the NH Liquor Commission; a position he has held since March 2019. He has successfully ensured that all legal administrative matters are coordinated properly and thoroughly with other divisions through their respective Director or designee. Mr. Vara has effectively advised, addressed, and enforced Commission policies, rules, and processes with the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Division Directors, and Administrators.

Prior to this role, Mr. Vara was the Chief of Staff at the New Hampshire Department of Justice from 2017 to 2019. While Chief of Staff, he was named the 2018 recipient of the Caroline and Martin Gross Fellowship by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. This enabled him to attend an intensive, three-week program for public servants around the world at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Mr. Vara was the Governor's Advisor on Addiction and Behavioral Health ("Drug Czar") from March 2016 until June 2017, working for both Governor Sununu and Governor Hassan. Mr. Vara was employed by the Grafton County Attorney's Office as an Assistant County Attorney from 2005 to 2009 before moving on to the New Hampshire Department of Justice, where he was employed from 2009 to 2016. While at the Attorney General's Office, he led the Drug Prosecution Unit in the Criminal Justice Bureau from January 2013 until starting with the Governor's Office in 2016. Before leading the Drug Prosecution Unit, he was assigned to the Homicide Unit and general prosecution. Mr. Vara received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Montclair State University in 2000, and his Juris Doctor from Rutgers University School of Law in 2003.

Mr. Vara is a true professional who is competent when representing the Commission before public bodies; he has enhanced the operations for the benefit of the Commission and the citizens of New Hampshire. Mr. Vara will serve the remaining term of this vacant appointed position, which concludes on August 5, 2024.

Your favorable action on this request would be appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joseph W. Mollica
Chairman

cc: DAS Business Supervisor