

Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

Ben Mickens 271-1403

HB 1204, relative to the grading and use of timber grown in New Hampshire.

Hearing Date: March 18, 2026

Time Opened: 9:21 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:37 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Pearl, McGough, Altschiller and Reardon

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Gannon

Bill Analysis: This bill allows certain timber grown in New Hampshire to be graded as spruce-pine-fir and requires the consideration of New Hampshire harvested timber for state building projects.

Sponsors:

Rep. A. Davis

Rep. Tierney

Rep. Durkin

Rep. Cole

Who supports the bill: Senator David Rochefort, Representative Mike Ouellet, Jasen Stock (NHTOA), Matt Mayberry (NHHBA), Nancylee Greiner, and Cory Stone.

Who opposes the bill: No one.

Who is neutral on the bill: No one.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Mike Ouellet

- Representative Ouellet introduced and testified in support of HB 1204 on behalf of Representative Davis.
- Representative Ouellet explained that Canadian lumber is listed as SPF and the same lumber is listed as SPF-S if it is grown and harvested in the United States.
- Representative Ouellet stated that New Hampshire lumbers get paid less for their product than the difference between the two woods is in reality miniscule.
- He stated that this bill would delineate all SPF wood harvested and milled above longitude 43.45 in New Hampshire as such and anything below that line as SPF-S.

- Representative Ouellet explained that currently logs that are harvested in New Hampshire are then sent to Canada to be milled and stamped as SPF to receive a better strength rating, even though they came from New Hampshire.

Senator Pearl asked if this bill is the exact same that Senator Rochefort presented earlier in the year.

Representative Ouellet responded that the two bills are certainly similar but he has not compared them exactly. He added that he has no concern regarding both bills passing.

Matt Mayberry of New Hampshire Home Builders Association

- Mr. Mayberry stated that this bill is the same of Senator Rochefort's bill.
- He explained that using a political border to determine the grading of wood does not make as much sense as using biological markers of the trees.
- Mr. Mayberry explained that the latitude line in the bill is around the Tamworth area.
- Mr. Mayberry stated that neighbor states are waiting to see how New Hampshire acts on this issue before creating legislation of their own.
- He stated that the grading of lumber is a federal issue but the State of New Hampshire can say they see the lumber as alternatives and will reflect that in our building codes. This change could then be brought through the federal delegation to the Department of Commerce.
- Mr. Mayberry explained that lumber companies in New Hampshire have lost business because of the artificial decrease in demand for New Hampshire lumber.
- He added that this bill would allow the consumer to decide which type of wood they would like to use rather than the engineers and architects.

Jasen Stock of the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association

- Mr. Stock voiced the association's approval of HB 1204.
- Mr. Stock explained that this bill would be a building block on the national scale while addressing only what New Hampshire has authority over.
- He stated that giving the consumer the option of which wood they would like to use is an incredibly important piece of the process.
- Mr. Stock reiterated the point that using political borders to determine the strength of trees is not good practice.

Senator Altschiller asked if there was a tension between the findings of the general court versus the substance of the bill, specifically regarding if there is a difference between SPF and SPFS.

Mr. Stock responded that the legislative findings is a proclamation that the General Court gives as an ideal. He added that the bill is simply stating that SPF and SPFS that is harvested and milled above the given latitude are to be treated the same in the state building code, which New Hampshire does have authority over.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented: None.

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Date Hearing Report completed: March 20, 2026