

HB 1303 - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2875

12/07

HOUSE BILL **1303**

AN ACT authorizing municipalities to adopt zoning ordinances related to the protection, management, or replacement of tree canopy.

SPONSORS: Rep. Vail, Hills. 6; Rep. Caplan, Merr. 8; Rep. Cloutier, Sull. 6; Rep. Haskins, Rock. 11; Rep. Howland, Straf. 20; Rep. Petrigno, Hills. 43; Rep. Spier, Hills. 6; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. Altschiller, Dist 24

COMMITTEE: Municipal and County Government

ANALYSIS

This bill authorizes municipalities to adopt zoning ordinances or master plan provisions addressing the protection, management, or replacement of tree canopy.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struck through.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT authorizing municipalities to adopt zoning ordinances related to the protection, management, or replacement of tree canopy.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Statement of Findings. The general court hereby finds that:

2 I. New Hampshire's forests and urban trees provide critical benefits, including filtering air
3 and water, intercepting rainfall, and reducing erosion.

4 II. Local tree canopy contributes to stormwater management and protects the quality of
5 rivers, lakes, and aquifers relied upon for public drinking water.

6 III. Tree canopy also contributes to property values, neighborhood character, and the health
7 and comfort of residents, including seniors and children, by providing shade and reducing excess
8 heat.

9 IV. Municipalities across the state have raised concerns about tree canopy loss and
10 requested clear authority to include canopy preservation provisions in zoning and master planning.

11 2 New Section; Local Land Use Planning; Zoning; Tree Canopy Preservation Authorized.
12 Amend RSA 674 by inserting after section 16-a the following new section:

13 674:16-b Tree Canopy Preservation Authorized.

14 I. A municipality may, at its discretion, adopt zoning ordinances or master plan provisions
15 providing for the preservation, management, or replacement of tree canopy. Such zoning ordinances
16 or master plan provisions may address the following:

17 (a) Retention of existing trees during development;

18 (b) Replacement or planting requirements where canopy is removed; and

19 (c) Long-term canopy management goals as part of the municipal master plan.

20 II. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any municipality to adopt such
21 ordinances or provisions.

22 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.