

HB 1530-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2740

08/06

HOUSE BILL ***1530-FN***

AN ACT requiring notification of abutters and public review prior to disturbing beaver dams in non-emergency situations.

SPONSORS: Rep. Colby, Merr. 9; Rep. Darby, Hills. 11; Rep. Stavis, Graf. 13; Rep. Knab, Rock. 12; Rep. C. Harvey, Ches. 6; Rep. W. Thomas, Hills. 12

COMMITTEE: Resources, Recreation and Development

ANALYSIS

This bill allows the removal of beaver dams or the result of beaver activity without a permit under certain circumstances. This bill also requires notification and a public meeting before removal of beaver dams for shared water bodies.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.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 requiring notification of abutters and public review prior to disturbing beaver dams in non-emergency situations.

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

1 1 Protection of Beaver; Shared Water Bodies. Amend RSA 210:9 to read as follows:

2 210:9 Protection of Beaver.

3 I. No person shall destroy or disturb or interfere in any manner with the dams or houses of
4 beaver, without first obtaining a special permit from the executive director.

5 II. Notwithstanding paragraph I or any other provision of law or rule, a landowner, the
6 landowner's agent, or any town or municipal or state official or employee, may destroy beaver,
7 remove beaver dams, ***clear culverts blocked by beaver activity, cause any significant***
8 ***lowering of the water level in a beaver impoundment***, or install one or more flow devices on
9 property under their control to protect property, public highways, ***public trails***, or bridges from
10 damage or submersion. The landowner, [ø] property owner, ***or landowner's agent*** shall be
11 responsible for maintaining the flow device. Complete or partial dam removal or the installation or
12 removal of a flow device shall be allowed without a permit under RSA 482-A if machinery does not
13 enter the water and filling or dredging in or adjacent to surface water, wetlands, or their banks does
14 not occur and shall be done in a gradual manner that does not allow a sudden release of impounded
15 water so as to cause erosion, siltation, or a safety hazard downstream. ***For the purposes of this***
16 ***section, "beaver impoundment" means a pond or wetland created or built by beavers.***

17 II-a.(a) ***Except in the case of an immediate threat to life or property, no landowner***
18 ***shall remove any beaver dam or cause any significant lowering of the water level in a***
19 ***shared beaver impoundment without first notifying the local governing body and***
20 ***conservation commission, if any, in the cities or towns where such dam or beaver***
21 ***impoundment is located, all abutters whose property interests will be directly affected by***
22 ***the removal or lowering of the water level at least 30 days prior to any action specified***
23 ***above.***

24 (b) ***The landowner intending to remove a beaver dam or significantly lower the***
25 ***water level in cooperation with the local governing body of each of the cities or towns, shall***
26 ***hold a public informational meeting at least 15 days prior to any action. The municipality***
27 ***shall publish a notice of the public informational meeting in a newspaper of general***
28 ***circulation in the county in which the action shall occur, or on the municipality's website,***
29 ***at least 7 days before the time set for the meeting.***

1 (c) *Such notice and public informational meeting are not required when*
2 *installing a flow device.*

3 **II-b.** For purposes of ~~paragraph II~~ **paragraphs II and II-a**, the term "flow device" means
4 one or more fence structures or other combination of fencing and piping used to discourage beaver
5 damming, maintain water flow through an existing beaver dam, or minimize the risk of flooding by
6 preventing the further impoundment of water behind a beaver dam. ***The term "shared" means the***
7 ***beaver impoundment covers or directly abuts land owned by another individual or a***
8 ***publicly owned beaver impoundment.***

9 III. The executive director may require the reporting of beaver taken pursuant to paragraph
10 II by rules made in accordance with RSA 541-A.

11 IV. Skins or unskinned carcasses taken under this section shall be sealed pursuant to RSA
12 210:8 before such skins or unskinned carcasses are sold or given away.

13 V. The executive director or his ***or her*** agents shall provide advice relative to beaver control
14 techniques when requested, ***including, when reasonably possible for a public informational***
15 ***meeting as described in subparagraph II-a(b).***

16 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

**HB 1530-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT requiring notification of abutters and public review prior to disturbing beaver dams in non-emergency situations.

FISCAL IMPACT: This bill does not provide funding, nor does it authorize new positions.

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	None			
Expenditures*	\$0	<u>Fish and Game Department</u> \$10,000 to \$100,000 Per Year		
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	Fish and Game Fund			
Appropriations*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	None			

*Expenditure = Cost of bill

*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

Estimated Political Subdivision Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Local Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Expenditures	\$0	Indeterminable		

METHODOLOGY:

This bill would require landowners planning on removing or significantly lowering the water level of a “shared” beaver impoundment to notify the local governing body, conservation commission, and any abutting landowners at least 30 days prior to any action. It would also require the landowner to work with the local governing body of the city or town to hold a public informational meeting at least 15 days prior to any action. The term “shared” is defined as any beaver impoundment that covers or directly abuts land owned by another individual or a publicly owned beaver impoundment. This definition would therefore require the Fish and Game Department to follow this process for any beaver impoundments on Department owned land. This bill would also require Department staff to provide input or participate in any public informational meeting held as described above, regardless of ownership. The Department states this would result in a substantial increase in workload for existing staff and it cannot estimate how many informational meetings would need to be held under this new language. The

Department states this could pull staff from existing responsibilities and could necessitate an additional staff member. The Department has not provided any details as to potential staffing it may need and estimates the cost could be between \$10,000 and \$100,000 per year. This bill provides neither authorization nor appropriation for new personnel.

The New Hampshire Municipal Association states there may be a \$10,000 or less impact, per municipality, associated with the requirements of this bill, if any informational meetings are held.

This is not expected to have any impact on the Department of Environmental Services.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Fish and Game Department, Department of Environmental Services, and New Hampshire Municipal Association