

Floor Amendment to HB 1616-FN

1 Amend the title of the bill by replacing it with the following:

2

3 AN ACT relative to the grading and use of timber grown in New Hampshire.

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5 Amend the bill by replacing all after the enacting clause with the following:

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7 1 Statement of Findings and Purpose. The general court hereby finds that:

8 I. The majority of structural timber harvested for building materials in New Hampshire
9 comes from Coos County, and many areas of Coos County extend farther north than portions of
10 Canada, where lumber is graded as spruce pine fir (SPF).

11 II. Timber graded as SPF from Canada is viewed as stronger and denser under international
12 design standards in part because of cold climate growth conditions; however, New Hampshire's
13 northern climate, soils, and growing conditions are substantially similar and produce the same
14 species of spruce, pine, and fir included in the SPF designation.

15 III. Architects and engineers typically specify "SPF" lumber in certain residential
16 construction documents. Because "SPF" is an international designation reserved for Canadian
17 graded wood, New Hampshire's native lumber graders cannot certify New Hampshire-grown spruce,
18 pine, and fir as SPF. Instead, the same species must be graded as spruce-pine-fir south (SPFS),
19 which is viewed in the industry as a separate, slightly weaker classification.

20 IV. This technical distinction disadvantages New Hampshire sawmills, loggers, and the
21 forest products industry, even though New Hampshire-grown wood from the north country is of
22 equal type and quality.

23 V. It is therefore the policy of the state of New Hampshire to ensure that New Hampshire
24 families and New Hampshire builders can build New Hampshire homes with New Hampshire wood
25 by eliminating the barrier between SPF and SPFS within the state building code.

26 VI. The general court of New Hampshire finds that wood density should be a latitudinal
27 demarcation rather than an arbitrary designation of density based upon political borders. Viewed as
28 latitude, New Hampshire encompasses 42 degrees, 40 minutes north up to 45 degrees, 18 minutes.
29 Timber harvested to produce building lumber between the latitude of 43 degrees, 45 minutes, 18
30 seconds north to 45 degrees, 18 minutes north warrants the same density demarcation as Canadian
31 SPF unless otherwise designated by a licensed architect or structural engineer.

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1 2 New Section; Use of Spruce-Pine-Fir (SPF) and Spruce-Pine-Fir-South (SPFS). Amend RSA
2 155-A by inserting after section 14 the following new section:

3 155-A:15 Use of Spruce-Pine-Fir (SPF) Lumber and Spruce-Pine-Fir-South (SPFS) Lumber.

4 I. For purposes of the state building code, spruce-pine-fir south (SPFS) lumber harvested
5 and milled in New Hampshire and graded either by a grader permitted under RSA 426:18 or by an
6 American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) accredited agency shall be accepted wherever
7 spruce-pine-fir (SPF) is specified.

8 II. Structural design and inspection shall use the published SPFS design values for the
9 grade and size provided.

10 III. Where a code evaluation report, product listing, or manufacturer's installation
11 instructions differentiate allowable loads or limitations by lumber species group, the allowable loads
12 corresponding to the installed species group shall be used. When SPFS lumber is installed, the
13 values for SPFS shall govern. This requirement shall apply, but not be limited to, structural
14 connectors, hangers, fasteners, truss plates, adhesives, and proprietary systems.

15 IV. Municipalities shall accept either a native lumber certificate pursuant to RSA 426:18 or
16 an ALSC grade stamp as sufficient proof of grade.

17 V. Nothing herein shall prevent a licensed architect or engineer from specifying higher
18 strength materials if required for safety and structural integrity of a structure. Licensed architects
19 and structural engineers shall also consider and shall provide alternative options of construction
20 utilizing SPFS lumber.

21 VI. This section shall not be construed to prohibit the use of SPF lumber graded by an ALSC
22 accredited agency.

23 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 180 days after its passage.

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AMENDED 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.