

# Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

*Ben Mickens 271-1403*

**SB 529-FN**, giving preference to lumber sourced in the United States on all state-funded building projects.

**Hearing Date:** January 21, 2026

**Time Opened:** 1:02 p.m.

**Time Closed:** 1:21 p.m.

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

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill requires that a preference to lumber sourced in the United States be given on all state-funded building projects.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. Rochefort

Sen. Pearl

Sen. Avard

Sen. Innis

Rep. A. Davis

Rep. Ouellet

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator David Rochefort, Senator Dan Innis, Sarah Belletete (NHRLA), Wesley Robichaud (NHRLA), DJ Burke (BIA), Jasen Stock (NH Timber Owners Association), Daniel Richardson.

**Who opposes the bill:** Katie McLaughlin, Melanie Kasparian.

**Who is neutral on the bill:** No one.

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Senator David Rochefort**

- There will be others who will come to testify to the specifics of lumber grading and other nuances.
- SPF is described as any spur, pine, or fir that comes from Canada, and there is a different name of “SPF-s” that distinguishes this type of wood when it is harvested south of the Canadian border.
- When building plans call for a SPF, we have to use Canadian lumber. This is even though the same tree grows in New Hampshire, just graded differently. This bill would allow us to buy local for the same type of wood even though it is technically denoted differently.

- This is related to state contracts and state business. Not a mandate, but a preference.

**Senator Gannon** asked about the word “preference.” If the Canadian price was lower, can I buy those?

**Senator Rochefort** says that “preference” is widely interpretable.

**Senator Reardon** asked what authority decides what is SPF vs SPF South.

**Senator Rochefort** stated he would defer to the experts for correction but that the federal government decided this.

**Senator Altschiller** clarified that the only difference between SPF and SPF South had to do solely with whether it was Canadian lumber or American.

**Senator Rochefort** confirmed this, as he understands the terms they only have to do with country of origin.

#### **Wesly Robichaud, Coastal Forest Products, NHRLA**

- The existing problem is that specifiers have used the terminology of SPF since the 1960s and it was nomenclature for softwood framing lumber.
- In 1991 the lumber industry established that a lumbers strength grade would be determined by both the strength of the tree and the grade of the wood. He explained that this decision was made by the American Lumber Standards Agency.
- Canada came up with the term SPF and kept it. This led to development of the term “SPF-s” since standards and testing are different in the US vs Canada.
- The lumber industry has colloquially ignored this distinction and referred to both Canadian and United States lumber as SPF. This meant that many engineers and architects were unaware that there was a difference at all.

**Senator Gannon** asked if there was a strength difference between SPF and SPFS.

**Mr. Robichaud** stated that on paper there is a slight difference but in practice there is none.

**Senator Gannon** followed up to ask if Canadian lumber was stronger.

**Mr. Robichaud** stated that this was the case but only perceivable under incredibly strenuous testing.

**Senator Reardon** asked if the American Lumbar Standards Agency still exists and whether they need to be involved in changing classifications.

**Mr. Robichaud** answered that they are not asking for any change of classification from American Lumbar Standards Agency, solely asking that the United States values are recognized and given preference where appropriate.

**Senator Reardon** asked if we could just change the name to SPF and match Canadian terms.

**Mr. Robichaud** responded that it is simply impossible to turn back the clock to make that change which is why they are asking for recognition that the “S” exists. He added that once designers recognize this difference, they will begin to incorporate it into their plans.

**Sarah Belletete, Belletetes Inc, NHRLA**

- Since 1991 we have seen a major increase in the amount of trucks bringing in Canadian SPF. Engineers regularly do not realize they are going against “Buy American” when putting SPF in their designs.
- We now have three yards that are only Canadian wood, space that could be used for SPF-s wood.
- She explained that her company would prefer to support a New Hampshire company.

**Jasen Stock, NH Lumber Association**

- Milan Lumber has seen a reduction in shipments to their facility.
- The SPF/SPFS difference regularly causes issues with orders they receive.
- We support this legislation and believe it will help raise awareness about this issue.

**DJ Burke, BIA**

- BIA is in support of this bill as it supports NH businesses.
- I would also underline that this is a preference and not a mandate.

**Summary of testimony presented in opposition:** None.

**Neutral Information Presented:** None.