

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Joshua Schauer 271-3077

HB 1425-FN, relative to the development of an online wetlands permit processing system.

Hearing Date: April 7, 2026

Time Opened: 11:29 a.m.

Time Closed: 11:32 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Pearl and Rosenwald

Members of the Committee Absent : Senators Avard, McConkey and Watters

Bill Analysis: This bill simplifies wetland permitting for small projects and gives the department of environmental services the authority to create an alternative adaptive permitting process for emergency or natural disaster response.

Sponsors:

Rep. Donnelly

Who supports the bill: 4 Individuals signed in Support of the legislation. Please contact Joshua.Schauer@gc.nh.gov for more information.

Who opposes the bill: 8 Individuals signed in Opposition of the legislation. Please contact Joshua.Schauer@gc.nh.gov for more information.

Summary of testimony presented:

Senator Howard Pearl, District 17

- Senator Pearl introduced on behalf of Prime Sponsor.

Darlene Forst, DES

- Darlene Forst from DES testified that the department supports the bill. She explained that it addresses two main provisions.
- First, it eliminates redundant processes, which will improve efficiency, particularly in the design of a new database, and make operations more cost-effective for the agency.
- Second, it establishes clear rulemaking authority, allowing the department to respond more flexibly in cases of emergencies or disasters.

Senator Pearl asked whether the changes would reduce oversight.

Ms. Forst responded that they currently operate under two timelines—one at 25 days and another at 30 days—and that the bill proposes eliminating the 30-day process.

JS

Date Hearing Report completed: April 8, 2026