

# Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

*Max Taylor 271-1403*

**HB 277**, relative to the use of the term "foal" and "colt."

**Hearing Date:** April 1, 2025

**Time Opened:** 9:00 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 9:06 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senator Pearl, Watters, and Rosenwald

**Members of the Committee Absent :** Senator Avard and McConkey

**Bill Analysis:** This bill replaces the term "colt" with the more inclusive term "foal" and clarifies language related to foals separated from their dams.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. Bixby

Rep. J. Aron

Rep. Comtois

Rep. M. Murray

Sen. Pearl

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**Who supports the bill:** Representative Peter Bixby (Strafford County District 13), Representative Judy Aron (Sullivan County District 4), Robert Johnson II (New Hampshire Farm Bureau)

**Who opposes the bill:**

**Who is neutral on the bill:**

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Representative Peter Bixby**

**Prime Sponsor, Representative Strafford County District 13**

- Representative Bixby introduced HB 277, explaining the bill is intended to fix a long-standing inconsistency in New Hampshire's animal cruelty laws.
- Currently, baby male horses (colts) are protected from being separated from their mothers before they are weaned at 90 days old, but female horses (fillies) are not.
- HB 277 would replace the word "colt" with "foal", a gender-neutral term for baby horses, to ensure both male and female foals receive the same protection.
- Representative Bixby stated this change would correct an unfair gap in the law.

**Representative Judy Aron**

**Sullivan County District 4**

- Representative Aron introduced herself as the Chair of the House Environment and Agriculture Committee.
- She described the bill as a simple “housekeeping” measure intended to clean up existing law.
- She stated HB 277 has passed through her committee and encouraged the Senate Energy committee to support the bill.

**Robert Johnson II**

**New Hampshire Farm Bureau**

- Mr. Johnson stated the issue addressed by HB 277 has been a concern for Farm Bureau members for a long time.
- He explained this proposal was originally part of a broader legislative effort brought to the House Environment and Agriculture Committee.
- He stated the House committee chose to address this specific part of the proposal separately and urged the committee to move the bill forward.

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

**Neutral Information Presented:** None.

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 2, 2025