

SB 503 - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2099
12/09

SENATE BILL **503**

AN ACT relative to the use of spruce-pine-fir lumber.

SPONSORS: Sen. Rochefort, Dist 1; Sen. Sullivan, Dist 18; Sen. Birdsell, Dist 19; Sen. McGough, Dist 11; Sen. Gray, Dist 6; Sen. Avarad, Dist 12; Sen. Innis, Dist 7; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. McConkey, Dist 3; Sen. Ward, Dist 8; Sen. Gannon, Dist 23; Sen. Lang, Dist 2; Sen. Murphy, Dist 16; Sen. Reardon, Dist 15; Sen. Pearl, Dist 17; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Perkins Kwoka, Dist 21; Sen. Abbas, Dist 22; Rep. A. Davis, Coos 2; Rep. Ouellet, Coos 3

COMMITTEE: Commerce

ANALYSIS

This bill promotes the use of New Hampshire-grown spruce-pine-fir lumber by specifying that spruce-pine-fir (SPF) lumber shall include spruce-pine-fir-south (SPFS) lumber within the New Hampshire building code.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.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 relative to the use of spruce-pine-fir lumber.

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

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

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

5 II. New Hampshire timber is often harvested locally, exported across the Canadian border,
6 milled and graded as SPF, and then re-imported into New Hampshire at a higher grade and higher
7 cost.

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

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

17 V. This technical distinction disadvantages New Hampshire sawmills, loggers, and the
18 forest products industry, even though New Hampshire-grown wood is of equal type and quality, and
19 in many cases has already been shipped to Canada, graded as SPF, and returned for use in New
20 Hampshire homes.

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

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

30 2 New Section; Use of Spruce-Pine-Fir (SPF) and Spruce-Pine-Fir-South (SPFS). Amend RSA
31 155-A by inserting after section 14 the following new section:

SB 503 - AS INTRODUCED

- Page 2 -

1 155-A:15 Use of Spruce-Pine-Fir (SPF) Lumber and Spruce-Pine-Fir-South (SPFS) Lumber.

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

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

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

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

15 V. Nothing herein prevents a licensed architect or engineer from specifying higher strength
16 materials if required for safety and structural integrity of a residential structure. Licensed
17 architects and structural engineers must also consider alternative options of construction utilizing
18 SPFS lumber.

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

21 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 180 days after passage.