

CHAPTER 32
HB 1204 - FINAL VERSION

5Mar2026... 0471h

2026 SESSION

26-2589
08/09

HOUSE BILL

1204

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

SPONSORS: Rep. A. Davis, Coos 2; Rep. Tierney, Coos 1; Rep. Durkin, Coos 1; Rep. Cole, Hills.
26

COMMITTEE: Resources, Recreation and Development

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.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

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

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

1 32:1 Statement of Findings and Purpose. The general court hereby finds that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 32:2 New Section; Use of Spruce-Pine-Fir (SPF) and Spruce-Pine-Fir-South (SPFS). Amend RSA
27 155-A by inserting after section 14 the following new section:

28 155-A:15 Use of Spruce-Pine-Fir (SPF) Lumber and Spruce-Pine-Fir-South (SPFS) Lumber.

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

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

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

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

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

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

32:3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 180 days after its passage.

Approved: April 22, 2026
Effective Date: October 19, 2026