

House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry

February 5, 2026

Act 181 Wood Products Manufacturers Discussion

Janet Hurley, Chair
Kirsten Sultan, Board Member
Peter Gill, Executive Director

Wood Products Manufacturers (WPM) Report

- Submitted on June 30, 2025

<https://act250.vermont.gov/wood-product-manufacturers-report>

Recommended
Statutory Changes:

<https://act250.vermont.gov/sites/actt/wofifty/files/documents/Memo%20Wood%20Products%20Manufacturers%20Recommended%20Statutory%20Language.pdf>



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Wood Products Manufacturers Report – Statutory Charge

- (a) The Land Use Review Board, in consultation with the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, shall convene a stakeholder group to report on how to address the Act 250 permitting process to better support wood products manufacturers and their role in the forest economy.
- (b) The group shall examine the Act 250 permitting process and identify how the minor permit process provided for in 10 V.S.A. §6084(g) has been working and whether there are shortcomings or challenges.
- (c) The group may look at permitting holistically to understand the role of permits from the Agency of Natural Resources, municipal permits, where they apply, and Act 250 permits and develop recommendations to find efficiencies in the entire process or recommend an alternative permitting process for wood products manufacturers.
- (d) On or before December 15, 2024, the Land Use Review Board shall submit the report to the House Committees on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry and on Environment and Energy and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

Report Recommendations

1. Develop a **WPM Fact Sheet and Supplemental Guidance** to help ensure that WPM are aware of all benefits in place for this sector. This would include availability of the minor application process; one to one primary agricultural soils mitigation ratio; special provisions for hours of operation and delivery; the “Stonybrook” precedent, under which **Act 250 jurisdiction may be limited to the project area** (rather than the entire tract of land); and other existing provisions concerning logging and forestry operations in general.
2. Provide **additional training to Act 250 program staff** on the specific needs and provisions available to WPM applicants and potential applicants.
3. The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to **offer WPM permit coordination and support.**

Report Recommendations Continued

4. Update Act 250 Rule 19 so that **presumptions reflect current relevant ANR permits** and determine whether ancillary permits can be obtained after Act 250 permitting and whether ancillary permits may be dispositive.
5. Update Act 250 Rule 34 to **revise thresholds for substantial and material changes** to allow for changes to reduce impacts without the need for a permit or permit amendment.
6. Revise Act 250 Rule 34(D) to allow district coordinators to **issue administrative amendments for minor changes to WPM** projects.
7. Evaluate use of Rule 16(D) for **informal and non-adversarial resolution** of issues, develop guidance as applicable, and provide related training.

Report Recommendations Continued

8. Advocate for **funding permit specialists**, improved **web-based tools**, and/or **ombudspersons** with regulatory expertise to work across agencies.
9. Recommend that the **legislature extend exemptions to forestry and logging** like those that are available for farming under elevation 2,500 feet, provided existing permit conditions for permitted projects limiting tree cutting to address Act 250 criteria are not invalidated, and provided tree removal limits are available conditions for future projects to address Act 250 criteria.
10. Recommend that the **legislature make changes to Act 250 regulation of log and pulp concentration yards**.

Questions

Contact:

Janet Hurley, Chair janet.hurley@vermont.gov

Kirsten Sultan, Member kirsten.sultan@vermont.gov

Peter Gill, Executive Director peter.gill@vermont.gov