



To: House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry

From: Vermont Forest Product Association (VFPA)

Date: 1/21/26

Re: Request to Implement Portions of [Act 181 Wood Products Manufacturers Report](#)

Requests:

1. (See Executive Summary #1, pages 1, 9,10) Direct the Land Use Review Board to develop a wood products manufacturers (WPM) fact sheet and supplemental guidance to help ensure that WPM are aware of all benefits in place for this sector. This would include the availability of the minor application process; one to one primary agricultural soils mitigation ratio; special provisions for hours of operation and delivery; and other existing provisions concerning logging and forestry operations in general.
2. (See Other Ideas Examined subsection K, page 16) Direct the Land Use Review Board to review all WPM applications through the Stonybrook determination process. This is the process by which an Act 250 project may encompass less than the entirety of the parcel on which it sits. The Land Use Review Board must review applications by the parcel's current use – as forest management, not as “development.” This request is not among those supported by the LURB, but is a priority from the forest products industry.
3. (See Executive Summary #2, pages 1,10) Direct the Land Use Review Board to provide additional training to Act 250 program staff on the specific needs and provisions available to WPM applicants and potential applicants.
4. (See Executive Summary #3, pages 1,10) Direct the Agency of Natural Resources to offer WPM permit coordination and support.
5. (See Executive Summary #9, pages 1,12) Amend 10 V.S.A. §§ 6001(3)(E), 6081(s) to extend exemptions to forestry and logging operations that currently exist for farming and agriculture under Act 250 and at elevations under 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 *development* projects to

address Act 250 criteria. Note the addition of the word “development” is intentional. The LURB has concerns with extending Act 250 exemption to forestry and logging operations was making it impossible to put in place tree removal limits on “development projects.” Making this limit on development projects is a way of getting closer to what the forest products industry had hoped for in the Report, without discarding LURB’s concerns.

6. (See Executive Summary #10, pages 1,12,13) Amend 10 V.S.A. § 6001(44) definition of “wood product manufacturers” and remove log and pulp concentration yards from the definition.

I. Executive Summary

The following actions are recommended by the Land Use Review Board to support wood products manufacturers (WPM):

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”¹ 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.
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.
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.

Additional discussion and detail concerning these 10 recommendations is outlined in Section V of this report. For items that include legislative action (#9 and #10), the Board will submit proposed statutory language for consideration after additional study. Section VI provides discussion and details on ideas examined by the Board, FPR, the stakeholder group, and wood products manufacturers but not currently recommended for action by the Board.