

Timber bill goes to Senate for consideration

The State House has passed proposed revisions of the state's 12-year-old law governing timber harvests on state, private and municipal land. The bill now goes to the Senate where the resources committee has passed similar legislation and sent it to the finance committee.

The heart of the bill, SB317, is a system classifying streams into nine categories and establishing buffers along high-value fishery-producing streams and rivers. For the first time, buffer requirements would be imposed for harvesting timber on private lands. The bill would require 66 foot no cut buffers on private lands along most high-value fishery waters.

And it would require larger buffers for timber harvests on public lands. The bill would require 100 foot special harvest zones near streams on state land north of the Alaska Range. The bill would allow harvests as long as fisheries and wildlife habitat are protected.

The bill would require more protection on state lands south of the range. People cutting wood there would have to set aside 100 foot no cut buffers near streams followed by 200 foot special harvest zones where they could cut wood.

People cutting wood on municipal, university or other public lands would have to set aside 100 foot no cut buffers.