



IMPORTANT NOTICE RE: SENATE BILL 30

Senate Bill 30 was passed and became effective on September 9, 2017, resulting in several changes to the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act, RSA 483-B. These changes fall into two broad categories.

1. The following changes regarding vegetation management were made to maintain a more natural distribution of vegetation along the shore and to alter definitions of terms to clarify existing standards:
 - The waterfront buffer segments used in the calculation of the vegetation point score have been decreased in width along the reference line from 50 feet to 25 feet. Segments still extend 50 feet inland. The points required within each full segment have decreased proportionally from 50 points to 25 points. In addition, for the purposes of required replanting within the waterfront buffer, the point limits for shrubs and ground cover within each full segment have reduced from “at least 15 points and not more than 25 points” to “at least 5 points and not more than 10 points”.
 - Definitions and terminology have been altered to clarify the existing regulations on vegetation management within the 150 foot wide area adjacent to protected waters, now defined as the “woodland buffer.” On any given lot, at least 25 percent of the woodland buffer area located between 50 feet and 150 feet from the reference line shall be maintained as natural woodland. The vegetation, exclusive of lawn, within the natural woodland shall be maintained in an unaltered state or improved with additional vegetation.
2. The following changes regarding the permitting process were made to promote better coordination between programs:
 - All projects solely funded by municipal, county, state, or federal entities are now exempt from permitting fees.
 - Timeframes associated with requests for more information now correspond to those in effect for wetlands permits. An applicant must respond to a NHDES Request for More Information within 60 days (reduced from 120 days). NHDES must make a decision following an applicant’s response to a Request for More Information within 30 days (increased from 20 days).

The complete bill language can be viewed at:

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/billText.aspx?sy=2017&id=948&txtFormat=pdf&v=current