

# Timber Grading Act HB 553

Presentation to the Economic and  
Rural Development and Policy  
Interim Committee  
July 7, 2025

Laura McCarthy  
State Forester  
Forestry Division Director  
Energy, Minerals and Natural  
Resources Department



1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

AN ACT

RELATING TO TIMBER; ENACTING THE TIMBER GRADING ACT;  
PROVIDING FOR IN-STATE STRUCTURAL TIMBER GRADING  
CERTIFICATES; PROVIDING FOR THE USE OF STRUCTURAL TIMBER THAT  
IS GRADED AND LABELED IN-STATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.--This act may be cited as the  
"Timber Grading Act".

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Timber Grading  
Act:

A. "building inspector" means a person certified  
by the construction industries division of the regulation and  
licensing department and certified by one or more trade  
bureaus to conduct inspections of permitted construction work  
to ensure that all work performed by a contractor or  
homeowner complies with applicable building codes;

B. "certificate" means the document provided to a  
person after completion of a program that allows that person  
to engage in timber grading and labeling as a grader;

C. "division" means the forestry division of the  
energy, minerals and natural resources department;

D. "grader" means the owner of a sawmill or a  
person employed by a sawmill who is certified to inspect,  
grade and label structural timber at that sawmill;



# Timber Grading Act Overview

- Created an in-state structural timber grading system and certificate program within the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division to provide training for sawmill owners and their employees to grade and label structural timber.
- Allows the program to be provided by the Forestry Division or a public post-secondary educational institution.
- Directs the Forestry Division to promulgate rules for the awarding of certificates, training components of the program, qualifications of program instructors, and grounds and processes for the suspension and revocation of certificates.
- Allows the Forestry Division to charge a fee (not to exceed \$250) for the issuance of a certificate.
- Allows the certified timber grader to label structural timber processed at the sawmill they own or are employed by.
- Allows the label may be in lieu of a grade stamp for use residential and commercial buildings.

# Timber Grading Act Implementation

- Timber Grading Handbook in development by Forestry Division and partners with federal grant support
- Review of other state handbooks (AK, NH, WI, TN)
- Workshop for peer-review to finalize handbook content
- State rulemaking to establish certification program will start after the handbook is completed
- First training events May – Oct 2026 with current USDA grant funding
- Application in 2026 for Wood Innovation Grant if the federal program still exists