



NEWS

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October 24, 2011

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New Design Values for Southern Pine Remain Under Review *ALSC Board of Review Opens 60-Day Comment Period*

The American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) Board of Review deferred decision on approving a recommendation by the Southern Pine Inspection Bureau (SPIB) that would modify design values for visually graded dimension lumber. As announced in an October 19 e-mail:

“The Board has determined that (in addition to the October 20 hearing) it will hold a second hearing approximately 60 days later to afford all interested parties an opportunity to comment in person on the technical aspects of the SPIB submission.”



The Southern Pine Inspection Bureau (SPIB) had submitted new design values for visually graded Southern Pine dimension lumber, for approval by the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) Board of Review at its October 20 meeting. Some 60 industry representatives attended to hear presentations from affected groups. Attendees represented all major stakeholder groups including lumber producers, component manufacturers, truss plate and software suppliers, builders, contractors, engineers, building officials, building material dealers, universities and government agencies. The ALSC Board of Review heard testimony from 11 speakers:

- Kirk Grundahl, representing the Structural Building Components Association (SBCA) and Qualtim.
- Steve Shroeder, representing SBCA and ProBuild
- Joe Hikel, representing SBCA and Shelter Systems
- Mike Cassidy, Truss Plate Institute
- Mark Rey, Michigan State University, representing Travis Lumber
- Gary Raven, Builders FirstSource
- Frank Moore, National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association
- Ed Sutton, National Association of Home Builders
- Rubin Smulsky, Mississippi State University
- Zachary Lowe, CLW Inc.
- Clayton Traylor, Leading Builders of America

In general, the speakers commented on the process, the available data, and the timing of publishing new design values on notice, and suggested a suitable transition plan would help.

The next scheduled ALSC Board of Review hearing will be January 5, 2012 in Washington, DC.

“This 60-day comment period will afford all parties time to consider all available data, all technical issues related to the science behind these proposed new values and help the ALSC Board of Review to render some equitable decision in the near future,” stated Adrian Blocker, president of the Southern Forest Products Association (SFPA), the marketing organization for Southern Pine lumber.

In announcing the 60-day comment period, ALSC requested that all interested parties submit their remarks in writing or in person at the January 5, 2012 meeting. “Parties should be mindful that the proposed changes are significant and should take steps they deem appropriate in the interim,” the announcement by ALSC President Tom Searles stated. Any interested party can request a copy of SPIB’s submittal from Tom Searles. Requests and comments may be directed to Mr. Searles, by e-mail to alsc@alsc.org, FAXed to 301/540-8004, or mailed to P.O. Box 210, Germantown, MD 20875.

SPIB is the first rules-writing agency to submit new values. Rules-writing agencies responsible for other species are in different stages for evaluating design values. The new values will ensure that Southern Pine lumber will continue to be a reliable material in the construction of residential and commercial buildings. Upon receiving final approval from ALSC’s Board of Review, SPIB will publish new design values for visually graded Southern Pine dimension lumber.

The last major change for visually graded dimension lumber occurred in 1991 when design values for Southern Pine and other North American species were published based on In-Grade testing of full-size samples of commercially produced lumber. Since 1994, SPIB has conducted an annual resource monitoring program developed in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory (FPL). Although the level established to trigger additional testing was never reached, overall trends in the annual test data suggested a possible shift in the resource mix. These trends, along with anecdotal external information, prompted SPIB to conduct a year-long program of testing and data review.

For additional background information plus answers to questions about the proposed new design values for visually graded Southern Pine dimension lumber, visit www.southernpine.com.

SFPA is a nonprofit trade association that has represented manufacturers of Southern Pine lumber since 1915. Today, SFPA is the leading source of information about Southern Pine products for design-build professionals and consumers.

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