



Steel Fabricators of New England

11 Robert Toner Blvd., # 234 | North Attleboro, MA 02763 | Phone: (603) 766-7363 | www.ssfne.org

Executive Departments and Administration
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Testimony in support of SB438, establishing state and local procurement policies intended to promote the use of American materials.

Chairman Carson and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in favor of SB438, establishing state and local procurement policies intended to promote the use of American materials.

My name is Cathy Flaherty. I am the Executive Director for SFNE, the Steel Fabricators of New England. SFNE members are structural steel and miscellaneous metal fabricators, and allied companies that serve the building and bridge construction markets in New England.

SFNE member companies are mostly family-owned businesses that provide good-paying jobs and benefits to thousands of families in New Hampshire and throughout New England.

Steel fabricators are not big steel companies. They buy steel from the mills, then modify the steel to meet the project's specifications by cutting, drilling, or painting. Steelworkers then take the steel from there and install it.

These steel fabricators need your help because publicly-funded jobs have gone to foreign fabricators at an increasing rate.

Every year, foreign companies take more and more of our work, and during my tenure, I have watched our member numbers dwindle and many steel fabricators go out of business. U.S. public construction dollars have strengthened foreign fabricators to the detriment of our industry here.

This suffering will only continue to get worse as we come out of the Pandemic and adjust to our new economy. The steel fabrication industry is at great risk, and we believe other manufacturing industries are facing this same predicament.

To help mitigate the inequity, SFNE is asking for policy changes requiring that domestic businesses are given preference over foreign companies that do not pay property taxes here, hire people, or contribute to the New Hampshire economy.

SB438 would require that public construction projects give preference to U.S. manufacturers when buying steel, iron, and other materials for new buildings and renovations.

Many states and the federal government have already passed laws similar to this to address this problem. We hope our legislators in New Hampshire will do the same.

We welcome your questions and would greatly appreciate your help and support.