

Denise & all.

I'll be unable to give testimony tomorrow to the House Committee on Government Operations regarding consulting foresters in Vermont.

My problem with the bill as written is that "foresters" who've practiced for 8+ years will not be required to take the CF examination developed by the Society of American Foresters. I believe that all practicing foresters should have to prove their competency to be licensed, regardless of years experience. Some "foresters" can only attribute 1/4 or less of their annual income to consulting forestry, and may have been doing so for 10+ years. I've been practicing full time for three years, and in that time have done more forestry work/hours than some who have practiced for 10+ years. Also there are consultants who've been practicing for 30+ years who have not kept up with advances in technology and the science of forestry. Why should these people get a free pass?

My other concern is required experience. I've heard some of my peers say that they'll recommend that foresters with BS degrees in forestry be required to have five years experience to be licensed. If this is added to the bill, what about young foresters like me? I've only been practicing full time for three years, and am self employed. Am I supposed seek employment with another firm, and take a huge pay cut? Consulting forestry is my livelihood, and my family relies solely on my income. I would hope that young foresters in my position would be given the opportunity to continue practicing on their own.

I am in favor of forester licensing, but not excluding young foresters or giving the old boys club a pass when it comes to proving competency in our field.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steve

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