

Written comments to the Senate Committee on Government Operations regarding H.355 (forester licensing and regulation) as passed by the House on May 6, 2015

Submitted by the Green Mountain Division of the Society of American Foresters  
March 31, 2016

The Green Mountain Division of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) represents about 115 foresters practicing forestry in a wide range of capacities, including private industry, state and federal government, academia and non-profits. Our Division supports rigorous forester credentialing programs as implemented by professional organizations such as SAF and/or through state-level forester licensing and mandatory registration requirements.

- We support the principles of H.355 and welcome forester licensing in Vermont. We believe forester licensing is good for the profession, the public, and the environment.
- We are pleased to see existing SAF content and standards integrated into the bill, including the SAF Certified Forester exam and Certified Forester experience criteria.
- We urge you and the Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) to continue to work with SAF, particularly the Green Mountain Division, to finalize this legislation and enact related regulations.
- Forestry is a very diverse field and every forester has a different approach to their job. The highly varied nature of forests means that there is not one acceptable approach for any one forestry task. There are likely dozens and most may be acceptable. Good forestry is very difficult to define and is open to interpretation. We stress the importance of the Director working closely with the advisors appointed by the Secretary of State and the forestry community to put in place a solid framework so that forester licensing is effective at reducing poor forestry, and does not simply become a hoop to jump through that does not benefit the Vermont landscape.
- The Green Mountain Division looks forward to working as a partner with the State.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Green Mountain Division of the Society of American Foresters by:

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With guidance from the national chapter of the Society of American Foresters

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