

IL355 AN ACT RELATING TO LICENSING AND REGULATING FORESTERS
Senate Committee on Government Operations
Testimony Given April 19, 2016
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My Background:

I am a professional forester with a Bachelor of Sciences Degree in Forestry, University of Maine 1963.

I have practiced my profession for 53 years in the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, California, Oregon and Idaho.

From 1991 to 1997, I worked for U.S. Senator Larry Craig of Idaho in Washington, DC as a forester and expert in natural resources policy. Senator Craig Chaired the Subcommittee on Forestry at the time. I also worked with the senator throughout the state of Idaho on forestry, watershed, wildlife and numerous Threatened & Endangered species issues. In my legislative work, I examined forest policy and legislation across the U.S., set up hearings, developed position statements and coordinated with many national interest groups interested in forest policy, one of which was the National Association of State Foresters. I don't remember the matter of forester licensing ever being raised, in any context, in my six years in D.C. It was a non-issue.

For the past 18 years, I have practiced as a consulting forester in central Vermont. Until now, licensing has never been a question or consideration in any of the states where I have worked. I Own and manage three woodland properties in Vermont. All are in Current Use and all are in the Tree Farm Program.

The Sunrise Report — Office of Professional Regulation:

I thoroughly disagree with the conclusions reached in the Sunrise Report which is the genesis for H.355.

Through my own involvement in forestry matters in this state, and through discussions with many of my peers, I cannot believe we have a problem sufficient to "*endanger the health and safety of the public,*" or a problem such that the "*Public cannot be protected by other means*" - both of which are conclusions in the Sunrise Report. Many of us engaged in forestry are shaking our heads in disbelief.

As a matter of fact, the forestry community in Vermont from the woodlot to the woodyard works very well, and all parties in this business have worked hard to make forestry activities something we can be proud of. As a result, support for "Working Forests" in Vermont is ubiquitous. You hear it everywhere.

But the Sunrise Report concludes we have failed — and here we are with H.355, a totally unneeded bill. If passed, it will increase management costs for landowners, shrink the cadre of professional foresters offering services, and confuse the practice of forestry in Vermont.

Two Examples:

1) In March, I received a request from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to participate on a task force to recommend improvements to the Current Use Program. My name was one of many consulting foresters listed on the e-mail. Since I have no intention of being licensed by the state of Vermont at this late date in my career, I informed the author that my name should be removed from her list since, if H.355 becomes law, I will no longer be qualified to participate.

I believe there are many other consulting foresters in the state who may be practicing only part time and have a limited client base, who will determine licensing is of no value to them and will drop out of the

American Tree Farm System Inspector Eligibility Requirements

The following minimum education and/or experience requirements are necessary for professionals certifying and inspecting Tree Farms.

- > All inspectors must successfully complete the Certifier Training Program. Inspectors must complete the refresher training every five years, which will coincide with AFF Standard revisions.

All inspectors must meet at least one of the four recognized requirements:

- > A Bachelor of Science, Forestry degree, or higher from a Society of American Foresters (SAF) accredited program.
- > Two-year forestry technician degree from an SAF recognized program.
- > Anyone already serving as a Tree Farm inspector prior to July 31, 1999 is grandfathered in as an inspector **provided** their names were included in a list of inspectors submitted by the State Tree Farm Chair to the American Forest Foundation by July 31, 1999 and has completed the Certifier Training Program.
- > Anyone professionally practicing forestry and meeting the following minimum educational requirements.

Forest Ecology and Biology: A minimum of one course in each of the three broad subject areas of Dendrology, Forest Ecology and Soils is required. Each subject area is described as follows: **Dendrology** — taxonomy; distribution; tree physiology, including metabolism and growth. **Forest Ecology** -- ecological concepts and principles; characteristics of tree growth, including structure and function of ecosystems, wildlife/fish biology, and ecology. Soils -- soil formation, classification, composition, and properties.

Measurement of Forest Resources: A minimum of one course in each of the three broad subject areas of Forest Measurements, Sampling Design and Techniques and Surveying and Mapping is required. Each subject area is described as follows: **Forest Measurements** -- forest inventory; growth and yield; volumetric, including measurement of trees, forests, and forest products; wildlife habitat assessment; measurement of water yields and quality. **Sampling, Design and Techniques** -- sampling theory and methods including statistics. **Surveying and Mapping** -- photogrammetry; remote sensing; land surveying, including mapping and area determination; geographic information system applications.

Management of Forest Resources: A minimum of one course in each of the three broad subject areas of Forest Management, Silviculture, and Forest Protection is required. Each subject area is described as follows: **Forest Management** -- integrated forest resource management on stand, system, and landscape scales, with consideration of wood, forage, water, wildlife, fish, recreation, cultural, educational, and aesthetic benefits; forest engineering, harvesting, and utilization. **Silviculture** -- to include methods of establishing and controlling the composition, growth, and quality of forest stands. **Forest Protection** — entomology and pathology, including the study of representative forest organisms and the application of integrated pest management; fire ecology and use of fire.

Forest Resources Policy and Administration: A minimum of one course in two of the three broad subject areas of Forest Policy, Forest Economics, and Business Management is required. This area integrates the understanding of the social, cultural, political, legal, economic, institutional, and historical influences of forestry. Each of the subject areas is described as follows: **Forest Policy** --forest policy history and development; application and administration; land and resource planning; real estate law. **Forest Economics** --forest or natural resource economics. **Business Management** -- budgeting; financial, and personnel management; accounting.

Exceptions

ATFS may review petitions for exceptions, and make eligible to participate as an Inspector, following completion of the required ATFS inspector training program, individuals that have comparable competencies to those who meet the ATFS Inspector education requirements stated in the *American Tree Farm System Certifier Eligibility Requirements*. ATFS recognizes the value of on-the-ground experience.