

Forester licensure: it's good for the environment.

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS

Our proposal:

increase forester responsibility
by amending the state law that currently provides for the regulation and licensure
of the professions of engineering, land surveying, and geology
to include the profession of forestry.

Has the public health, safety, and economic wellbeing been endangered because foresters are not licensed in Pennsylvania?

In situations where foresters provide timber-harvesting services to landowners and are responsible for preparing and overseeing erosion and sedimentation control plans, properly prepared and implemented plans protect the public health, safety and economic well being. Inadequate preparation, implementation, contract enforcement, and compliance with regulations and best management practices can create long-term problems for land owners and the forest. The United States Forest Service Forest Inventory Analysis, which tracks changes in forest productivity and health, indicates that less than half of timber harvesting taking place in Pennsylvania is sustainable (with sustainability being an indicator that a new, economically desirable forest stand will regenerate after harvesting). In too many cases, little planning for the regeneration of the future forest takes place when timber harvesting takes place on private forestlands in Pennsylvania. Licensed foresters would be expected to make certain that landowners are aware of the importance of and the practices that should be employed to provide for a healthy, economically viable forest after harvesting. Because licensed foresters would uniformly be held to a higher standard of knowledge and experience, it should be expected that they will provide better guidance to land owners.

Will the regulation of the profession of forestry in Pennsylvania affect/benefit the environment?

While trees are a renewable resource, the quality, productivity, and very existence of a forest can be diminished or destroyed in a matter of days or even hours. What happens on an individual tract of land can have profound impacts on neighboring forests. The extent to which forests are healthy affects the quality of soils, watersheds, and wildlife habitat. Licensure of foresters in Pennsylvania can increase the likelihood that these impacts are considered along with economic considerations in the management of our forests. Proper and scientific management of the Commonwealth's forests will help ensure their health, scenic beauty, value, and productivity for generations to come.

For additional information about the proposal to license
professional foresters contact:

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*The nation behaves well if it treats the natural
resources as assets which it must turn over to the
next generation increased, and not impaired.*

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 1910.

