

Forester licensure: the legislative proposal.

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.

What are the purposes of the proposal?

To define “forestry;” to define who a “forester” is; to make foresters accountable to the landowners they pledge to serve; and to require continuing education to ensure forester competency.

Will the proposal require individual landowners to use a forester?

No. However, if a landowner chooses to use a forester, there will be assurance that the best scientific advice based on the potential of the forest and the objectives of the owner will be received and that services will be rendered in a professional and ethical manner.

The proposal does not, in any way, limit landowners’ property rights or their ability to manage their land as they see fit. The proposal requires that foresters provide landowners with complete and truthful information about the consequences of various harvesting methods and forest management practices. The landowner would be free, however, to accept or reject the advice of the forester.

How will the proposal help the public identify qualified practitioners?

Only licensed individuals will be permitted to represent themselves as “foresters.” Non-licensed individuals who represent themselves as professional foresters will be subject to criminal prosecution. The licensing board will maintain a list of licensed foresters.

What standards are proposed for granting credentials?

The general requirements for an individual seeking licensure as a forester is identical to those for individuals seeking licensure as engineers, land surveyors, and geologists. The specific standards for licensure as a forester require a specific level of educational attainment or a specific period of experience or both, passage of an examination, and payment of appropriate fees.

Are these standards comparable with those required by other states?

Yes.

Will alternative routes of entry be recognized? Will applicants who have not gone through prescribed training/experience be eligible for licensure?

No, individuals who do not meet the required educational and experience requirements and who have not passed the required examination shall not be eligible to be a professional forester.

Will licensure in other states provide an avenue for an individual to be credentialed in Pennsylvania?

Individuals holding an unexpired license to practice forestry issued by another state which has licensing requirements and standards similar to those of Pennsylvania shall be issued a license in Pennsylvania without having to take the Pennsylvania examination. The individual will be required meet Pennsylvania's requirements for maintaining their license by completing the prescribed level of continuing education.

Will applicants for licensure be required to pass an examination? Who will develop the examination and how will it be developed?

Applicants for licensure will be required to pass an examination. The professional forester examination will be developed by a qualified and approved professional testing organization pursuant to the provisions of the Pennsylvania Administrative Code which govern all examinations conducted by the Commonwealth.

Is there a "grandfather" clause in the proposal?

Yes. Individuals practicing forestry at the time of enactment of the professional forester licensure provisions who have met the educational and experience requirements, or their equivalency, may be exempt from taking the examination required for licensure.

Will licenses be required to be renewed periodically and, if so, will practitioners be required to show evidence of continued competence?

Yes. Every two years, licensed professional foresters will have to provide documentation that they have completed at least 40 hours of continuing education offered by a professional society or association of foresters which has been approved by the state licensure board.

How will the public's complaints against practitioners be handled? What will be the method of receiving complaints, who will examine them, how will incompetent or unethical practitioners be disciplined?

Professional foresters will be subject to the same disciplinary process as professional engineers, land surveyors, and geologists, which is administered by the state licensure board. Individuals found to be incompetent or unethical shall be subject to a range of sanctions, ranging from license suspension to civil and criminal prosecution, as determined by the licensure board.

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.