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Environment and Transportation
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Agriculture and Aquaculture

Energy

Environment

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Testimony in Favor of House Bill 342
Forestry Licenses - Applicant Qualifications - Alterations

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, and fellow members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 342 to update the educational requirements to qualify for a Forestry License here in Maryland. This legislation is necessitated by an accreditation change made by the Society of American Foresters.

In 2024, the Society of American Foresters (SAF) published a revised accreditation handbook which provided a new accreditation for colleges and universities with urban forestry programs – urban forestry programs differ significantly from traditional forestry programs, and would not necessarily contain the required course work to enable a person to proficiently practice forestry in Maryland.

Current law, however, does not take this into account, and an individual could apply for and obtain a license to practice forestry in Maryland with a degree from an SAF accredited urban forestry program.

This legislation would give the Board of Foresters the authority to review an applicant's transcript to determine if the accreditation is under the forestry standard or the urban forestry standard and make a decision to approve or deny the application based on the college degree and potential course work in traditional forestry obtained by the applicant.

Additionally, this legislation would enable applicants with equivalent internationally accredited degrees (that are not accredited by the Society of American Foresters) to be eligible to apply for a forester license in Maryland. We are potentially working out additional clarifying amendments with the Department of Natural Resources.

Once again, I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 342.