



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

Bill Number: Senate Bill 695

Short Title: Natural Resources -Voluntary Firewood Treatment Certification Program-Establishment

Department's Position: Support

Explanation of Department's Position

Senate Bill 695 establishes a Voluntary Firewood Treatment Certification Program within the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR or Department) to certify kiln treatment procedures for forest product operators who export firewood to other states.

The movement of firewood can be a significant pathway for the introduction and spread of invasive forest pests and pathogens. As such, many states have specific regulations pertaining to the treatment and movement of firewood. These regulations are based on heat-treatment standards that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Plant Board have developed prescribing the time and temperature that firewood must be exposed to disinfest all life stages of specific insects and pathogens.

Inspection and certification of kiln treatment procedures ensures that these standards are being met. The USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service provided inspection and certification services when the United States had a quarantine for emerald ash borer; however, their authorization to provide these services ended with the removal of the quarantine on January 14, 2021. Without certification, Maryland firewood producers have no path to comply with other states' regulations and therefore, cannot access regional and national markets for sales of products such as firewood bundles.

SB 695 authorizes DNR to develop a kiln certification process in consultation with the Maryland Department of Agriculture and federal partners. The process would include, at a minimum, annual inspections of kilns and the kiln-operator procedures. Additionally, DNR would develop an approval label that could be affixed to the product to demonstrate that the products have been adequately treated in a certified kiln.

SB 695 will have a positive impact on Maryland small businesses that sell firewood products and the broader forestry industry while also preventing the spread of invasive pests and pathogens.

For any additional information, please feel free to contact our Legislative and Constituent Services Director, Bunky Luffman.

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