

Chesapeake Tree & Crane Services, LLC

February 22, 2023

HB-612 Natural Resources – Licensed Tree Experts - Alterations

SPONSOR: Delegate Courtney Watson

POSITION: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chairman Barve, Vice Chairman Stein, and members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me to present House Bill 612.

There are a large number of licensed tree experts in Maryland that are selling, or renting out their license number to unqualified, untrained, uninsured, contractors, permitting them to perform tree services to the unsuspecting consumers.

This is causing the consumer to be taken advantage of and putting them at a great risk. These unqualified, inexperienced contractors are taking advantage of the consumer by improperly diagnosing or recommending work that may be unnecessary. Most times these contractors are not properly insured to cover any damages that may occur from said work.

Tree work is very dangerous. It takes a lot of experience, training, knowledge, know how, safety equipment and gear...even with all of those accidents still happen. That is why it is important to leave it up to the ones who have been through, and must to go through continuing education as mandated by law to maintain our licenses. Continuing to allow contractors to be about to operate without this training, not follow safety guidelines, not be properly insured, is a risk that needs to be stopped. These guys should have to carry their own Tree Expert license, and pass the state exam to do so. By allowing them to “shortcut” the system it is unfair the companies that are following the law, working hard and following guidelines. We are struggling to keep work coming in. The costs of all insurances, and workers compensation is constantly increasing along with all overhead for the business. This causes us legitimate companies to have to increase costs, to balance out. The other contractors are operating without these types of expenses. They are able to sell the work at ridiculously low rates. Taking work from guys doing it legally. This is a very hard and dangerous industry. This bill would help to reduce some of the risks and help to protect the guys doing it right, and most of all the consumer.

I respectfully ask that you provide a favorable report on House Bill 612.

Keith Cotter
Keith Allen Cotter

Licensed Tree Expert #1018