



February 20, 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.

I believe there needs to be tighter regulations on licensing. First, we have gotten numerous business cards and fliers in the mail from companies presenting themselves as “licensed and insured”, when I look them up on DNR, their companies are nowhere to be found. Also, they are illegally opening mailboxes to place cards and fliers. Second, we offer competitive price matching to our customers from other licensed and insured tree companies. When our customers have sent us their quotes from other companies, they are not actually licensed but advertise themselves as so.

There have been several instances where another unlicensed company has recommended the removal of a healthy living tree. When the customer contacts us for a second opinion there is no necessary need to remove the tree. They do not have the proper education to properly diagnose tree diseases. They also do not have proper education of correct times of the year to prune and trim trees to keep up with their levels of optimal health. This also leads to incorrect treatment of diseases, unnecessary tree removal, and trees unproperly trimmed leading to overall poor health of the tree. This can cause a higher risk in climate change, as well as the loss of animal habitats.

I feel like customers are at risk because if their trees are incorrectly trimmed or treated, it will result in having to have the tree removed because of poor care. In the event that there is damage done to their property or home, these companies that are unlicensed and not insured may not be able to repair the damage done. They also run a major risk to themselves in the event of an injury to themselves. The customers are being lied to and false advertised to. This could run a great risk to them in the event of an accident.

We are a very small family owned and operated company who takes great pride in our work and customer relationships. Ryan has gone on many estimates where people wanted a misdiagnosed tree taken down and we have had to educate the customer. I do believe the continued education

should be in person only and not online. I feel there needs to be more rules and laws enforced on this topic.

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

Katie Bogas and Ryan Williams with Magnolia Tree and Landscape Specialists.