



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 24, 2026

BILL NUMBER: HOUSE BILL 342 – THIRD READER

SHORT TITLE: FORESTRY LICENSES – APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS – ALTERATIONS

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports HB 342 as it will ensure that licensed foresters possess appropriate education and training consistent with professional standards. Additionally, amendments accepted by the House help to preserve flexibility for the State Board of Foresters to evaluate qualifications on a case-by-case basis and to avoid unintentionally excluding qualified individuals based solely on accreditation status or degree title.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Maryland law requires individuals seeking a forestry license to meet specific education and experience qualifications established in the Business Occupations and Professions Article. Under current statute, applicants must graduate from a four-year forestry curriculum approved by the State Board of Foresters and demonstrate at least two years of professional forestry experience indicating competence to practice.

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the nationally recognized professional organization that accredits forestry degree programs in the United States and establishes standards for forestry education. In recent years, colleges and universities have expanded the number and variety of natural resource–related degree programs, including interdisciplinary, graduate-level, and international programs. While many of these programs provide rigorous and relevant forestry training, they may not always carry SAF accreditation or fit neatly within traditional degree titles, potentially excluding otherwise qualified applicants from licensure consideration.

House Bill 342 updates statutory education requirements for forestry licensure to reflect accreditation standards and modern educational pathways while maintaining the Board’s role in evaluating applicant qualifications.

BILL EXPLANATION

As written, House Bill 342 alters the qualifications for applicants seeking a forestry license by modifying the educational requirements in §7–304 of the Business Occupations and Professions Article. The bill is intended to strengthen educational standards for licensed foresters while ensuring consistency with nationally recognized accreditation practices.

Contact: Lydia McPherson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
lydia.mcpherson1@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-875-7785 (cell)