



SOIL SCIENCE
SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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October 17, 2006

Mr. Toby Rodgers, President
WA Society of Professional Soil Scientists (WSPSS)
P.O. Box 881
Newman Lake, WA 99025

Dear Mr. Rodgers:

The Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) would like to express its support and encourage the State of Washington to pass licensing legislation for Soil Scientists.

SSSA is a 6,000 plus member, scientific society with a 75 year history of leading soil science related issues. SSSA also administers the Certified Professional Soil Scientist / Classifier (CPSS/C) programs with over 1,200 certified soil scientist/classifiers throughout the US and Canada.

The membership of SSSA includes individuals from academia, government and the private sector. Many soil scientists are now entering the private sector in fields predominantly related to environmental protection and urban issues. SSSA is committed to helping these soil scientists through the certification programs and/or licensing programs at the state level. Certification and licensing programs help to establish the profession by following a set of standards. These standards also strive to protect the public interest from substandard performance.

SSSA administers the examination process for the certification programs as well as for other states with licensing programs. There are seven other states that have enacted state licensing, NC, WI, MN, ND, ME, TX and NH. Several other states are considering licensing or a state based certification process while working with SSSA. These partnerships help to minimize costs while maintaining a creditable exam process. SSSA provides valuable national guidance through the exams and certification processes that helps to maintain consistency between state boundaries but soils related issues can quickly become state specific. That is why it is so important to have state licensing legislation enacted.

State government is charged with protecting the public interests. Soil scientists work with land owners on environmentally related issues that may and in some situations do impact public health, safety and welfare. For example, an on-site septic system that is not sited correctly will not only negatively impact the home owner but also has the potential to contaminate the drinking water in that area endangering public safety and health. This is only one example that could be minimized through proper licensing legislation.

SSSA would like to encourage the State of Washington to pass soil science licensing legislation and where appropriate, is willing to assist in the administration of that process.

Sincerely,

Mary Collins, Ph.D.
President, Soil Science Society of America