



Washington Society of Professional Soil Scientists

AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE WASHINGTON SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS

December 21, 2006

I am writing this letter to officially record the support and desire of the Washington Society of Professional Soil Scientists (WSPSS) to see the successful pursuit of licensure of soil scientists in the State of Washington. Since 2001, WSPSS has backed a grass roots effort to see the State of Washington enact legislation that would grant soil scientists a program for licensure. This desire for licensure has in fact been brought forward by soil scientists themselves in the interest of better protecting public health, safety, and welfare through effective oversight and regulation of professionals in the field of soil science.

Unfortunately, examples exist where substandard work under the guise of soil science has directly impacted the public interest with respect to water and habitat quality as well as property ownership and management. The Department of Licensing confirmed the need for licensing in a December 2005 Sunrise Report. Seven other states (NC, WI, MN, ND, ME, TX and NH) have seen the need for regulation and have enacted state licensing. Many more states are in the process or are considering licensing. We are fortunate that the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) provides valuable guidance and is responsible for administering a national certification and registry program for Soil Scientists based on qualifications and examinations. Our effort here in Washington uses the SSSA examination and qualification guidelines as the model for the Washington State licensing program. WSPSS and its members stand ready to help guide the licensing program to ensure the best protocols and science are implemented.

WSPSS was organized in 1974 and has the mission to increase the overall knowledge and awareness of soil science and the role of the Soil Scientist in the public and private sectors. Throughout our history, WSPSS has worked to fulfill this mission by demonstrating and promoting sound scientific principles, leadership, and high standards of excellence while maintaining a close affiliation with SSSA.

The membership of WSPSS includes individuals from academia, government and the private sector. A licensing program in our state would allow the adoption of a set of standards to ensure those that practice soil science are qualified and that they maintain those qualifications. It is the sincere hope of WSPSS that the great State of Washington will find it in the best interest of its citizens to pass legislation to establish a licensing program for soil scientists.

Sincerely,

Toby Rodgers, B.S. Geology, M.S. Soil Science
WSPSS President

WSPSS
P.O. Box 881, Newman Lake, WA 99025

“A nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself.” Franklin Roosevelt