



NATIONAL SOCIETY OF CONSULTING SOIL SCIENTISTS, INC.

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DATE: February 8, 2009

SUBJECT: State of Washington legislation (SB-5698 and HB-1881) to certify the professions of soil scientist and wetland scientist.

TO: Mr. Toby Rodgers & Ms. Lisa Palazzi
Washington Society of Professional Soil Scientists
P.O. Box 881
Newman Lake, WA 99025 - 0881
and
All Concerned Parties

The National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists, Inc (NSCSS) fully supports the efforts of all parties to approve SB-5698 & HB-1881 within the State of Washington. These acts will establish the proper education, training, experience, and certification of individuals professionally consulting as “soil scientists” or “wetland scientists” within the State of Washington.

Certification or licensing is a giant step for any occupation or profession, as it establishes standards for individuals professing to be competent in a particular field of expertise. More importantly, the public’s expectations and need for a standard of care, responsibility, liability, and ethical standards are fulfilled. National organizations (SSSA; NSCSS; SWS) and several States have already established professional soils licensing or certification to meet the public’s demand for competency in the practice of soil science or wetland science.

Prior to 1970, soil science and land quality evaluations were for the most part agriculturally based. There was little need for soils certification / licensing, as poor estimates or evaluations did not affect the public as a whole. Since 1970, multiple environmental land-use policies and regulations evolved with soil and land as critical base factors: ---404 wetlands; ---401 wetlands; ---on-site waste treatment; ---soil & erosion control; ---stormwater control; ---coastal management acts; ---conservation overlays; ---planning & zoning; and etc. Land value, its’ potential or limitation, and sometimes legal ownership may hinge on whether the soil or land is hydric, wet, dry, impermeable, rocky, steep sloped, salic, “Waters of the U.S. or State”, or usable / unusable for a specified use.

Individuals professing to have the educational requirements, minimum experience, and adherence to recognized policies should be held to established State or National standards. The general public should expect to have a pool of professionals to choose from, that exceeds minimum standards of competence, and are responsible for their works both ethically and legally.

We hope you find this information helpful in your efforts to establish certification or licensing of “soil scientists” and “wetland scientists” within the State of Washington. The NSCSS fully supports the State of Washington’s current legislation SB-5698 and HB-1881 to certify the professions of soil scientist and wetland scientist.

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