



STATE OF MICHIGAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN CALLEY
LT. GOVERNOR

July 2, 2014

Michigan House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Lansing, Michigan 48913

Michigan Senate
State Capitol Building
Lansing, Michigan 48913

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today I am returning to you Enrolled House Bills 4379 and 4380 and Senate Bills 481 and 484 without signature. At the beginning of my term of office, I directed the Office of Regulatory Reinvention (ORR) to review the statutory framework of all licensing boards and to consider the necessity, the authority, and the functioning of those boards. In February 2012, ORR submitted a report to me recommending the deregulation of certain occupations along with the restructuring of the statutes for several occupations. That report recommended that foresters be deregulated.

At the time of the recommendation, the review concluded that the "regulation" of foresters was little more than a registration system, providing little statutory authority to protect the public. In addition, the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) had no forestry expertise and no ability to properly regulate foresters.

Upon further review, I have concluded that a clear, concise, and rigorous licensing program for foresters in Michigan can help achieve long-term goals for capitalizing on the enormous public and private forest resources in our state.

Professional foresters are a critical link in the state's forest economy. Michigan's Department of Natural Resources, which manages 4 million acres of public forest land, relies on those professional foresters to make critical decisions about harvest and management, including the identification and treatment of pests that can threaten whole forests.

At the same time, the Commercial Forest, Forest Stewardship and Qualified Forest programs are designed to encourage proper forest management practices on private lands.

Without certification to ensure appropriate education and training, the objectives of both public and private programs would be compromised.

I am convinced that improving—not eliminating—Michigan's Licensed Forester statute is necessary. We need to assure both the public and private landowners that services are being provided by professionals with appropriate education, skills, and a commitment to a code of ethics. Such professional standards will accelerate the Michigan forest product industry's ability to meet the goals established at the 2013 Forest Product Summit.

It is for these reasons that today I am returning House bills 4379 and 4380 and Senate Bills 481 and 484 without signature. I respectfully request that legislation transferring the oversight of professional foresters to the DNR be adopted as soon as practical. I have directed the DNR to work with the legislature in crafting an oversight role that modernizes and elevates Michigan's regulatory system for professional forestry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Snyder", written over a horizontal line.

Rick Snyder
Governor