



## **Michigan Society of American Foresters**

Representative Gary Howell, Chair  
Natural Resources Committee  
Michigan House of Representatives  
PO Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

December 4, 2017

Dear Representative Howell,

The Michigan Society of American Foresters represents 425 professional foresters in Michigan. SAF membership requires an agreement to adhere to a code of ethical and science based forestry. Established in 1900, SAF is the only organization representing the profession of forestry in Michigan.

The Michigan Society of American Foresters supports HB 5001 and Part 535- Registered Foresters, the voluntary registration of professional foresters and the establishment of the Board of Foresters.

Michigan has 12.6 million acres of private forestland. 9.1 million acres is owned by non-industrial, small private landowners. This land annually supports a 20-billion dollar forest products industry.

This bill includes functions, performance standards, ethics, education and experience qualifications for Registered Foresters. With this regulation, landowners will be able to easily determine if the forester they are employing is qualified to assist them, and will be accountable for ethical standards, sustainable practices, and science-based recommendations.

This bill also establishes a Board of Foresters to ensure that Registered Foresters are qualified and complying with professional and ethical performance standards for the work. A Violations Committee will also be established to enforce the standards.

The Registered Forester program is the only Michigan-based forester qualification program and is referred to in other legislation and programs, such as the Michigan Qualified Forest Program.

The 2014 legislation to deregulate the profession of forestry was opposed by the Governor's Timber Advisory Committee, the Michigan Forest Products Council, the Michigan Association of Timberman, the Society of American Foresters, and the Association of Consulting Foresters.

There is a need for professional foresters to lead the ethical oversight of forestry and to help ensure scientific, sustainable and environmentally-sound forestry practices are used on private and industrial lands in the state of Michigan. This requires education and experience with the principles of forestry and forestry research. Registration will allow landowners to have that assurance.

A registered forester will help to ensure the impacts to other natural resources such as vegetation, soils, water, and wildlife are understood and considered when developing timber harvest plans and contracts, building roads, designating trees to be cut and all work associated with science-based forest management. Past experience with unsound and unsustainable forestry has led to the need to continue this regulation.

Thank you for considering our input, and please call me with any questions.

*/S/ Andy Van Dyke*

Andy Van Dyke, Chairman  
Michigan Society of American Foresters

*The Michigan Society of American Foresters is the scientific and educational association of professional foresters, including consultants, researchers, professors, students, and employees of public agencies and private firms. The Mission of SAF is to advance the science, technology, education and practice of professional forestry to benefit current and future generations.*