

Connecticut Tree Protective Association, Inc.

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We Advance the Care of Connecticut's Trees



March 16, 2009

The Members of the Government Administrations and Elections Committee
Room 2200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Organized August 16, 1922

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Dear Co-Chairs Senator Gayle Slossberg and Representative James Field Spallone, Ranking Members Senator Michael A. McClachlan and Representative John W. Hetherington, and all the Members of the Government Administrations and Elections Committee:

We write on behalf of our membership and on behalf of the licensed arborists in Connecticut. We wish to state our view that the Tree Protection Examining Board, established by statute to advise the Commissioner of DEP with regards to the arborist license, should remain. In effect, we write in opposition to the provision within **Bill Number 6375** that this Board be disbanded.

The Connecticut Tree Protective Association is an educational association dedicated to advancing the care of trees in Connecticut. In existence for 87 years, we currently have 791 members. About two-thirds of the approximately 900 licensed arborists in Connecticut are members of CTPA. As such, we feel that we have a solid grasp on those issues of importance to arborists in the state.

The Tree Protection Examining Board, in fulfilling its duties, has two main responsibilities. After an oral examination, it recommends to the Commissioner of DEP those candidates it finds are qualified to be arborists. Also, through its role in the examination process, the Board establishes the standards for arboriculture in the state. The Board is a largely volunteer group, consisting of two licensed, practicing arborists, three members of the public at large and the plant pathologist and the forester from the CT Agricultural Experiment Station. Other than the time of the two CAES scientists, the only cost to the state are incidental travel expenses for Board members, generally less than \$500 per year.

From this investment, the state gains a model of public and private partnership. It is widely recognized that Connecticut has a strong arborist licensing program and that the standards for tree care in Connecticut are among the highest in the country. When an individual earns his or her arborist license in Connecticut, the achievement is often one of profound professional fulfillment.

Not only does this shared sense of accomplishment invest the profession in our state with a deep spirit of pride, it also yields tangible benefits for the citizens of Connecticut. Certainly, those who pay for the professional services get healthier and safer trees. There is also a spill-over effect. Because the importance of quality in tree care is so widely recognized in the state, the standards set by the Tree Protection Examining Board also have influence over the type of tree work done by municipalities and utilities. Hence, those trees that each of us see, virtually on a daily basis, are also healthier and safer as a result of the efforts of the Tree Protection Examining Board.

This is a very large benefit from a relatively small investment on the part of the state. Further, it must be stated that the largely voluntary efforts of the professional and public

Board members help DEP greatly as that agency fulfills its responsibilities regarding the arborist license. Without the Board, DEP would have to take on additional testing burdens and would have to find new ways to access expertise in tree care. If the Board were to be eliminated, it is hard to imagine how the work of the Board would be done otherwise, much less done as effectively or efficiently.

We realize, of course, that these are difficult times for our economy and that funding shortfalls and difficult problems require innovative solutions. We understand the Governor's desire to propose solutions in these tough times. However, we feel that, upon closer examination, the Tree Protection Examining Board will more than show itself to be a beneficial, cost-effective and much-needed governmental entity – a model of professional and governmental cooperation – and one well worth keeping.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Parrott', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Donald T. Parrott, President
Signing for the CTPA Board of Directors