Gregory A. Foran, President
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February 23, 2009

Government Administration and Elections Committee
Room 2200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: HB 6375 – Opposed (Needs Amendments)

I am opposed to House Bill #6375 as it would usurp a fine example of public/private partnership by eliminating the Tree Protection Examining Board (TPX). This Board provides oversight in the licensing of arborists in Connecticut and does so at no cost to the government or to those seeking licensure. While the bill terms the body of this Board and several others as "unnecessary and obsolete", I do not believe that either is true. In fact, I think the elimination of this Board would ultimately lead to an influx of licensing unqualified candidates to do tree work as arborists. In an attempt to reduce government spending and streamline processing, it would either eliminate a final oral review of candidates for licensing or add a new cost for paid staff to conduct the tests, thus driving the cost of the budget higher. (I would offer the same opinion relative to the Invasive Plant Council and Forest Advisory Board.)

In our efforts to reduce the budget and cut government waste and bureaucracy, let us remember that it was a lack of oversight which led to our woes in the financial sectors and in food safety with the peanut poisoning fiasco. Just as more spending doesn't necessarily mean better government, neither does less government always mean a better business climate for the private sector. Licensed arborists in CT have always proudly conformed to rigorous testing as a mark of professionalism. Please don't diminish the mark of a Connecticut arborist license by lowering the standards. It is a nationally recognized model program and should be celebrated, not torn apart by this broad brushed approach.

As the President of the Tree Wardens Association of Connecticut representing almost 200 members from nearly 90 towns, I am asking that you oppose eliminating the Tree Protection Examining Board and either vote against House Bill #6375 or see that it is amended to keep the TPX Board.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Gregory A. Foran
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