

Testimony to The Committee on Environment regarding Bill 6538

AN ACT CONCERNING ARBORISTS AND TREE WARDENS

Good afternoon Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile and members of the Environment Committee. My name is Doug Williams an Arborist with Bartlett Tree Experts for 28 years. I am Vice President and Past President of The Connecticut Tree Protective Association (CTPA) and a member of the Connecticut Environmental Council (CTEC). I am here to support Bill 6538 An Act Concerning Arborists and Tree Wardens.

While not a perfect bill this proposed legislation will enable DEEP to better regulate “Arborist business”. By this I mean it will be more difficult for tree care businesses to operate without a licensed Arborist registered to the entity. This will result in protecting consumers from unregulated and non-licensed tree care and streamline the process of DEEP investigations, saving time and money. With this efficiency it should allow the inspectors to perform more inspections and provide better protection of the people and trees of Connecticut. This bill is a major step forward with respect to enforcement; it takes away the ability for non-licensed individuals to hide behind a gap in the law.

It is not often that an organization is in favor of more regulation or increased expenses. However, because this legislation allows for better enforcement ultimately it will benefit the professionalism of arborists and protection of the consumer.

There are a couple of flaws in the proposed language. First the “Arborist Business” does not differentiate between those that only consult and those that actually work on trees. This additional registration and associated fees are an extra burden to the consultants.

Secondly, there is no emergency provision for unanticipated separation of the licensed Arborist from the business in cases of death or termination. This could leave a respected and responsible business without the ability to operate. The business would need some time to hire a licensed Arborist or attain an arborist license. Since the tests are only given every 3 months I would suggest a 6 month time frame to allow the business to continue for an existing licensed Arborist business.

Regards,

Doug Williams

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