

## **The Maine Heritage Policy Center Testimony to Support LD 1754**

### **“An Act To Amend the Geologist and Soil Scientist Licensing Laws”**

Senator Herbig, Representative Daughtry, and distinguished members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Adam Crepeau and I serve as a policy analyst for The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1754.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center supports this bill because it would create a new pathway to become a soil scientist in the state of Maine. While we would like to see the Board of Certification of Geologists and Soil Scientists eliminated, this bill is a step in the right direction. LD 1754 would allow an individual to earn an associate’s degree and demonstrate work experience to be eligible to take the exam to be a soil scientist. According to Title 32, Chapter 73, a bachelor’s degree is currently required to take the exam. In addition, this bill would allow aspiring soil scientists to take the exam before they graduate.

While The Maine Heritage Policy Center commends the sponsor for attempting to make the licensing process less stringent for soil scientists, we would prefer the board to be eliminated. There is no reason to license soil scientists in the first place - only 10 states license this profession by using the exam established by the Soil Science Society of America.<sup>1</sup>

There are 229 geologists and 58 soil scientists actively licensed in the state of Maine.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the board is to “ensure public safety through licensure and certification of professional geologists and soil scientists defined by education and experience.”<sup>3</sup> There is little need for a board that governs less than 300 individuals currently licensed. In fact, the Office of Policy and Management recommended that the Board of Certification of Geologists and Soil Scientists be discontinued in 2013 because the complaint process was rarely used, very few people become licensed in the profession and its existence does not contribute anything to public safety.<sup>4</sup>

This committee members should ask this question before moving forward with this bill: What is the purpose of this license and how does it provide tangible benefits to Mainers?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.soils.org/certifications/become-certified>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pfr.maine.gov/ALMSOnline/ALMSQuery/SearchResults.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing/professions/geologists/purpose.html>

<sup>4</sup> [https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/ofpr/appropriations\\_committee/materials/PartFReport.pdf](https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/ofpr/appropriations_committee/materials/PartFReport.pdf)

*We the people of Maine...*

THE MAINE HERITAGE POLICY CENTER

The Maine Heritage Policy Center believes professions should only be licensed if the public's health or safety are at risk. This license does not rise to either occasion. Thus, we support LD 1754 but urge the committee to amend the bill to eliminate the Board of Certification of Geologists and Soil Scientists. Thank you.