

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5065

As Reported by House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to obtaining a geologist license.

Brief Description: Modifying when a geologist license may be obtained without a written exam.

Sponsors: Senator Swecker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 3/26/03, 4/2/03 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Extends the "grandfather" period for geologists to become licensed without taking an examination.
- Defines the practice of soil science and clarifies the overlap in the practices of soil science and geology.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Crouse, Holmquist, Hudgins and McCoy.

Staff: Matt Cooper (786-7106).

Background:

In 2000 the Legislature established a licensing program for persons practicing geology or using the title "licensed geologist" or a similar title. The Department of Licensing (Department) administers this program with the advice of the State Geologist Licensing Board.

Minimum requirements for licensure as a geologist include specified education and

experience, and passage of a written examination. However, applicants for licensure were not required to pass the written examination if they met the education and experience requirements and applied for licensure before July 1, 2002.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Applicants who register to become licensed geologists before July 1, 2003, will be licensed without an examination, provided they meet the current educational and experience requirements.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amendment defines the "practice of soil science" and clarifies that both soil scientists and geologists may perform services in the area where the scopes of practice for the two professions overlap. The amendatory section which defines the practice of soil science and the interrelationship of the scopes of practice expires in July 1, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: When the Geologist Licensing Act (Act) passed and allowed for a "grandfather" period, there were people who qualified under the grandfather provisions who did not hear about it until it was too late to become licensed under the provisions. This bill would re-open that provision so that those who are qualified, but did not know about the licensing act will have a chance to become licensed without taking the written examination.

This bill should be amended to include provisions from House Bill 1966 to address the way the geologist licensing act affects soil scientists. The Act included a very broad scope of practice for geology, which included things that soil scientists have traditionally done. The Act has prevented some soil scientists from doing some work they have traditionally done.

There needs to be an amendment which will define the practice of soil science and allow soil scientists to work in practice areas covered by both geology and soil science. Both professions have training, experience, and expertise in these areas and are fully qualified to do the work.

Testimony Against: When the Act passed, word was spread that there was a grandfather period to become licensed without taking a test. People from all over the country heard about this provision and successfully applied for licensure in Washington. No additional time is necessary. Allowing more time will dilute the licensing act and defeat its purpose.

Soil scientists should not be allowed to conduct slope stability assessments. They do not have the educational background or expertise to do this work. The soil scientist's professional association study guide does not include any information on slope stability.

Testified: (In support) Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; Dale McGreer, Western Watershed Analysts; Allan Miller, Connolly, Tacon and Meserve; Anthony Bredberg, B & A, Inc.; Bob Dick, American Forest Resource Council; Wes Jennings, Puget Land Consultant; and Herman Gentry, Gentry Consulting.

(Opposed) Tom Badger, Washington Section of Engineering Geologists; Stephen Palmer; and Kenneth Neil, Kenneth Neil & Associates.