
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 1966

Brief Description: Defining the practice of soil science and setting out the educational and other requirements to be a soil scientist.

Sponsors: Representatives Kirby, McMahan, Chase, Cairnes, McIntire, Carrell and Darneille.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates an exception to the Geologist Licensing Act for soil scientists practicing soil science.

Hearing Date: 3/3/03

Staff: Matt Cooper (786-7106).

Background:

In 2000 the Legislature established a licensing program for persons practicing geology in this state. The Department of Licensing 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.

Persons who practice geology for others must be licensed. The practice of geology for others is defined as consultation or preparing reports or documents on the investigation, interpretation, evaluation, mapping, planning, or inspection of geologic data which may be relied on by the public or a governmental agency. Geologic work internal to a business or agency does not require a license.

Soil scientists consult and prepare reports on the investigation, evaluation, interpretation, planning, management, classification, and mapping of soil and soil behavior. Soil scientists consult and prepare reports for individuals, businesses, and government agencies.

Some agencies have determined that the practice of soil science falls within the scope of practicing geology in the Geologist Licensing Act. Those agencies have refused to contract with soil scientists for work they have traditionally performed because the soil scientists are not licensed geologists.

Summary of Bill:

The practice of soil science is defined as performing soil science investigation, evaluation, planning, management, classification, and mapping of soil types, and the interpretation of soil behavior (including erosion and landslide assessment).

A soil scientist is defined as a person who has met certain educational and work experience requirements in the field of soil science. The Director of the Department of Licensing must establish rules regarding qualifying education and work experience.

Soil scientists practicing soil science are exempt from the licensing requirement in the Geologist Licensing Act.

Rules Authority: The bill contains provisions addressing the rule-making powers of the Department regarding determinations of the adequacy of soil scientist education and experience.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.