

**SB 5446 - DIGEST**

Finds it is in the public interest to regulate the practice of soil science in order to protect life, property, health, and to promote public welfare; to define the practice of soil science as a profession by establishing minimum standards of ethical conduct and professional responsibility and by establishing professional education and experience requirements; and to prevent abuses in the practice of soil science by untrained or unprincipled individuals.

Creates an advisory committee to provide recommendations to the board and the director concerning the administration of this act.

Requires the advisory committee to make recommendations to the board regarding: (1) Developing and adopting rules to administer this chapter including, but not limited to, evaluating the experience, scope, and standards of practice of soil science;

(2) Reviewing complaints and investigations pertaining to the practice of soil science; and

(3) Performing other duties deemed necessary by the director or the board.

Declares that the director has the following authority in administering this act: (1) To adopt, amend, and rescind rules approved by the board as deemed necessary to carry out this chapter;

(2) To adopt fees as provided in RCW 43.24.086;

(3) To administer licensing examinations approved by the board and to adopt or recognize examinations prepared by other organizations as approved by the board;

(4) To adopt standards of professional conduct and practice as approved by the board; and

(5) To enter into an assurance of discontinuance in lieu of issuing a statement of charges or conducting a hearing. The assurance must consist of a statement of the law in question and an agreement to not violate the stated provision. Violation of an assurance under this provision is grounds for disciplinary action.

Provides that, in order to become a licensed soil scientist, an applicant must meet the following requirements: (1) An applicant who applies for soil scientist licensing before July 1, 2006, is considered qualified for licensing, without further written examination, if the applicant possesses the specific record of being a current soil science society of America certified professional soil scientist or certified professional soil classifier in good standing.

(2) On or after July 1, 2006, in order to become a licensed soil scientist, an applicant must: (a) Be of good moral and ethical character as attested to by letters of reference submitted by the applicant or as otherwise

determined by the board; (b) have graduated from a course of study in soil science satisfactory to the board or satisfy educational equivalents determined by the board; (c) have a documented record of a minimum of five years of experience obtained after the completion of the academic requirements specified in this section, in soil science work of a character satisfactory to the board, demonstrating that the applicant is qualified to assume responsible charge of such work upon licensing as a soil scientist. The board requires that three years of the experience be gained under the supervision of a soil scientist licensed in this or any other state, or under the supervision of others who, in the opinion of the board, are qualified to have responsible charge of soil science work; (d) pass an examination covering the fundamentals and practice of soil science prescribed or accepted by the board; and (e) meet other general or individual requirements established by the board under its authority under this act.