

Georgia Occupational Regulation Review Council

Meeting Minutes: December 9, 2022

Attendees GORRC Members	Other Attendees and Affiliation
<p>Meaghan Carver, Chair, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget Kelly Dudley (SAO) Ashley Short (AGR) Kate Iannuzzi (DNR) Sen. Ed Harbison, Georgia Senate Sen. Larry Walker, Georgia Senate</p> <p>Absent: Megan Andrews (DPH) Georgia Steele, Department of Revenue (DOR) Sam Teasley, Secretary of State (SOS) Rep. Tom Kirby, Georgia House of Representatives Rep. Steven Meeks, Georgia House of Representatives</p>	<p>Advocates: Kay Kendrick, Georgia Board of Cosmetology and Barbers Chair Brian Stone, Georgia Board of Registration for Foresters Chair Tim Lowrimore, Georgia Forestry Commission Director Andres Villegas, Georgia Forestry Association President and CEO Tim Miller, Georgia Forestry Association Advocacy Director Darren Mickler, Executive Director of Secretary of State Rep. Tom Corbett, Georgia House of Representatives Rep. Clay Pirkle, Georgia House of Representatives</p> <p>OPB Staff: Cody Pyle Christian Hamby Zach Gilbert Jakob Allen</p>

I. Call to Order

Chair, Meaghan Carver, called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM and welcomed the members of the Council to the third meeting regarding HB 1617 and the second meeting regarding HB 1479.

II. Recap Previous Meeting and Approve Minutes

Meaghan Carver recapped the second meeting pertaining to HB 1617 and the first meeting pertaining to HB 1479 and asked the council for any suggestions or edits needed to be made to the minutes. Kelly Dudley made a motion to approve the minutes and Ashley Short seconded the motion to approve. The minutes for the November 30th meeting were unanimously approved.

III. House Bill 1617 – Barbers and Cosmetologists

a. Vote on Final Report

The chair moved to approve the final report for HB 1617, however not enough councilmembers specifically for HB 1617 were present for a quorum. The vote was

moved until after a discussion of HB 1479 to give councilmembers more time to join the meeting.

IV. House Bill 1479 – Foresters

a. OPB Staff Research

Jakob Allen presented OPB staff research pertaining to HB 1479 and the professional licensure of foresters.

Sen. Larry Walker asked for clarification if a license could be awarded to an individual who possesses an associate degree in forestry or a related field.

Brian Stone, Georgia Board of Registration for Foresters Chair, noted that there is such a path for associate degree holders.

Darren Mickler, Executive Director of Secretary of State, added that though the path exists, no accredited school in the state offers an appropriate associate degree program.

Sen. Larry Walker asked if such a program should be created at a school like Middle Georgia State University.

Andres Villegas, Georgia Forestry Association President and CEO, said that a report commissioned from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia noted that there is a gap in forestry license applicants. He also noted that steps should be taken to advance programs in forestry at schools like the University of Georgia and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College to offset this gap.

Brian Stone agreed that an associate degree program or one-year program in forestry ought to be made.

Kelly Dudley, State Accounting Office, asked why certain states might not license forestry professionally.

Brian Stone responded that most of the states that do not license foresters do not have commercially viable forests.

V. House Bill 1617 – Barbers and Cosmetologists

a. Vote on Final Report

Discussion returned to HB 1617 with Sen. Ed Harbison's arrival, which resulted in a quorum for HB 1617. The chair moved to approve the final report for HB 1617. The vote was 5-0, with 4 members absent. The votes were:

- Office of Planning and Budget – Yea
- State Accounting Office – Yea
- Department of Agriculture – Yea
- Department of Natural Resources – Yea
- Georgia State Senate – Yea
- Department of Revenue – Absent
- Department of Public Health – Absent
- Office of the Secretary of State – Absent

- Georgia House of Representatives – Absent

VI. House Bill 1479 – Foresters

a. Public Comment

Rep. Tom Corbett, bill sponsor, described why he sponsored this bill by saying that allowing the licensing process for foresters to switch over to the State Forestry Commission would be a better fit for foresters.

b. Questions from Council

Meaghan Carver mentioned how the professional engineers and land surveyors board had been approved to move into its own independent agency. She asked if any workforce change had occurred.

Darren Mickler responded that professional engineers and land surveyors have not yet moved. When they do – and if it is decided that foresters will as well – he suspects a realignment of boards and workforces would occur.

Meaghan Carver asked if professional engineers and land surveyors moving would free up time for forestry issues.

Darren Mickler said this might occur but noted that other boards may move in to fill the space.

Meaghan Carver asked if the State Forestry Commission and/or State Board of Registration for Foresters had spoken with Sam Teasley, Secretary of State's Office, following the previous GORRC meeting.

Darren Mickler said that he had not spoken with Sam Teasley.

Brian Stone responded that he had reached out to Sam Teasley but had not gotten a response.

Tim Lowrimore, Georgia Forestry Commission Director, said that he had spoken with Sam Teasley, but it was only an introduction and no substantive discussion about forestry licenses occurred.

Meaghan Carver noted that the fiscal note requested for HB 1479 was still being drafted and asked if the \$90,000 set aside for an administrative assistant to aid the State Board of Registration for Foresters was still an accurate estimate.

Tim Lowrimore reaffirmed this estimate.

Meaghan Carver asked about the nature of the three complaints that the State Board of Registration for Foresters received and how they were resolved.

Darren Mickler said that the one had to do with a forester working with an expired license, and the other two dealt with the inadequate supervision of a forester.

Meaghan Carver asked if license applications were tracked by the State Board of Registration for Foresters.

Darren Mickler responded they were not.

Brian Stone asked what the general severity of revoked licenses was over the past few years.

Darren Mickler cited an example of a licensed forester double-charging individuals for timber. He noted that instances like this can cause a severe loss of wealth for individuals seeking the forester's services. Darren Mickler also mentioned that foresters who fail to follow directions can cause significant harm.

Brian Stone asked how investigations of complaints regarding foresters would improve under the State Forestry Commission.

Darren Mickler mentioned that the State Forestry Commission can investigate criminal matters. Other infractions are referred to the State Board of Registration for Foresters. Darren Mickler noted that Secretary of State investigators may not have the requisite knowledge to ask specific forestry-related questions.

Meaghan Carver asked if the State Forestry Commission assisted the Secretary of State in these investigations.

Darren Mickler responded that no, the State Forestry Commission does not aid the Secretary of State in investigations outside of the referral of questions to the Secretary of State.

Brian Stone noted that there is no ill will between the State Board of Registration for Foresters and the Secretary of State's Office.

c. Council Discussion

Sen. Larry Walker asked if a third meeting was scheduled for HB 1479.

Meaghan Carver responded yes, there is a meeting to discuss GORRC's findings regarding HB 1479 and to vote on the final report.

Sen. Larry Walker asked if the outstanding fiscal note pertaining to HB 1479 would prevent GORRC from voting on the bill.

Meaghan Carver stated that the fiscal note would be completed by the next meeting on December 20.

Sen. Larry Walker expressed his support for HB 1479.

Meaghan Carver mentioned a concern regarding the precedent set by moving state licensing boards to independent agencies.

Kelly Dudley noted that verbiage in HB 1479 needs to be correct out of courtesy to the State Accounting Office.

There were no further questions from councilmembers.

VII. Announcement of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on December 20, 2022, from 1:00 PM until 1:30 PM.

VIII. Adjourn