



March 26, 2003

Mr. P. Michael Freeman
Fire Chief
Los Angeles County Fire Department
1320 N. Eastern Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90063

SUBJECT: Assistant Chief, Forestry Position – Registered Professional Forester license

Dear Mr. Freeman:

The California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA) represents over 800 Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) and associated resource management professionals who manage forested landscapes in the state of California. Our organization supports forest management policy that promotes application of sound forestry principles. In addition, we promote professional forestry in California, and assure that forest management activities in California are provided by RPFs pursuant to California Public Resource Code § 750, et. seq.

It has come to our attention that the recent position announcement for Assistant Chief, Forestry, for the Los Angeles County Fire Department, no longer identifies the requirement for the applicant to hold a valid California Registered Professional Forester license. This heretofore “Minimum Requirement” has now been reduced to a category of “Desired Qualifications.”

The California Licensed Foresters Association believes the requirement to hold an RPF license for the Assistant Chief, Forestry position should be continued based upon the following.

As part of the Coordinated Resource Management Agreement, the Los Angeles County Fire Department can act as the lead agent in cooperation with other governmental agencies in projects concerning natural resources. Through the Department's Forestry Division, this position, Assistant Chief, Forestry, will supervise the Forestry Division's Vegetation Management Program, as well as assist in the administration and management of the Forestry Division. These activities take place on forested and oak woodlands located in the service area of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

California is currently one of thirteen states, which requires a license to practice forestry. Specifically, in California, those tasks involving the practice of forestry on non-federal lands require the use of a Registered Professional Forester, under California's Public Resources Code (PRC), §766:

“On and after July 1, 1973, it shall be unlawful for any person to act in the capacity of, or use the title of, a professional forester without being registered pursuant to this article

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Under the California Code of Regulations (CCR) §1602, the definition of “professional forester”:

“...refers to any person who is working in a responsible position as an individual or through the **supervision of others**, and performs services on forested landscapes applicable to “Forestry” (**emphasis added**)”.

California is very specific, and has defined “forestry” under the Public Resource Code §753 as:

“...the science and practice of managing forested landscapes and the treatment of the forest cover in general, and includes, among other things, the application of scientific knowledge and forestry principles in the fields of **fuels management and forest protection**, timber growing and utilization, forest inventories, forest economics, forest valuation and finance, and the evaluation and mitigation of impacts from forestry activities on watershed and scenic values, to achieve the purposes of this article...(**emphasis added**)”

In addition, California has also defined “forested landscapes” as:

“...those tree dominated landscapes and their associated vegetation types on which there is growing a significant stand of tree species, or which are naturally capable of growing a significant stand of native trees in perpetuity, and is not devoted to non-forestry commercial, urban, or farming uses.” (PRC § 754)

As noted above, in California, a Registered Professional Forester license is required to practice forestry and provide forestry services on tree covered forested landscapes. The position of Assistant Chief, Forestry will administer and manage the Forestry Division and provide oversight for vegetation programs located on timber and oak woodlands. CLFA requests that applicants for this position hold a valid California Registered Professional Forester license.

The Public Resource Code § 752, description of the professional forester’s, scope of license and expertise makes it clear this position falls under these provisions.

(a) ““Professional forester” as used in this article, means a person who, by reason of his or her knowledge of the natural sciences, mathematics, and the principles of forestry, acquired by forestry education and experience, performs services, including, but not limited to, consultation, investigation, **evaluation, planning, or responsible supervision of forestry activities** when those professional services require the application of forestry principles and techniques (**emphasis added**).”

If you have any further questions regarding the licensing requirements in the State of California, please contact, Mr. George D. Gentry, Executive Officer, Foresters Licensing. Mr. Gentry can be reached at 916-653-8031, or by e-mail at george.gentry@fire.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Bonnie J. Burchill, RPF 2590, CF
President

Cc: David Leininger, Chief, Forestry Division, County of Los Angeles Fire Department
Cc: George D. Gentry, RPF 2262, Executive Officer, California Foresters Licensing