

April 21, 2024

Representative Daryl Deshotel
900 North Third Street
State Capitol
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Re: House Bill 959

Dear Representative Deshotel:

On behalf of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (LCASLA) we write to express our strong opposition to HB 959, which would terminate the landscape architecture professional license within the Department of Agriculture and Forestry. The LCASLA shares many of your same goals to ensure that our state is a great place to live and work. However, as discussed below, the provisions in HB 959 to eliminate licensure for landscape architects would have the opposite effect. **Therefore, we request that you remove the provisions that would eliminate licensure for landscape architects.**

All 50 states and the District of Columbia license landscape architects, due to the health, safety, and welfare impact of the profession. Landscape architects plan, design, and manage the natural and built environment around us: nature-based infrastructure, living shorelines, green stormwater systems, parks, community master planning, walkable neighborhoods, multimodal transportation networks, and much more. Through these responsibilities, landscape architects keep the public safe from hazards, protect vital natural resources within our state, and foster active lifestyles. The public interest is best served when qualified professionals perform these services.

Louisiana landscape architects address public health, safety, and welfare through designing, documenting, and supervising the construction of millions of dollars in infrastructure and site improvements in our beautiful state every year. Our work can be seen throughout Louisiana – Audubon Park & Zoo, City Park, and the New Orleans Riverfront (Woldenberg Park) in New Orleans; Moncus Park in Lafayette; Town Square, Rhorer Plaza, Repentance Park, and the Downtown Greenway in Baton Rouge, and hundreds of other public and private projects in Louisiana communities big and small. It's the landscape architect's responsibility to ensure these designs create healthy, safe, and resilient natural and built environments.

Professional licensing, as an indicator of qualification, is particularly critical in highly technical professions, such as landscape architecture. Oftentimes the general public and private sectors do not have the specialized knowledge needed to evaluate qualifications and performance, and therefore rely on licensure to ensure competency. To become licensed, landscape architects must meet rigorous education, experience, and examination requirements.

Our profession's qualifications for licensure includes a rigorous STEM focused Bachelor's or Master's education, encompassing study in the natural and physical sciences, engineering and environmental studies, design principles, urban planning, and more. Then, after acquiring real-world supervised experience and passing a comprehensive four-part national licensing exam can an individual be recognized as a Professional Landscape Architect (PLA). Additionally, Louisiana landscape architects must also pass a state exam focused on our unique environmental characteristics.



Louisiana Chapter of the American
Society of Landscape Architects

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Landscape architects take pride in our contributions to public health and safety and to Louisiana's unique culture and sense of place. Through the design of Louisiana's parks and recreational trails, Complete Streets, college campuses, and downtown plazas, landscape architects have created safe spaces for people to lead free and prosperous lives. Therefore, we request you exempt licensure of landscape architects from HB 959.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss the profession's impact on the health, safety, and welfare of Louisiana citizens and the built and natural environment, please do not hesitate to contact us at Michael Petty, ASLA, PLA, mpetty@ddgpc.com, 931.581.3114 and Justin Lemoine, ASLA, PLA, jklemoine@gmail.com, 225.931.4863.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Petty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Michael Petty, ASLA, PLA
President, Louisiana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Justin Lemoine". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Justin Lemoine, ASLA, PLA
Trustee, Louisiana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects

Cc: House Committee on Commerce

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