



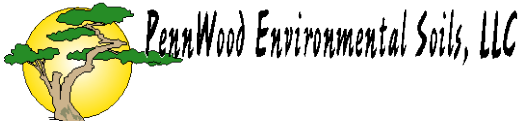
Professional Licensure Committee
House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Hearing on House Bill 997
May 7, 2014

**Testimony of Catherine Sorace
Certified Professional Soil Scientist
Owner, PennWood Environmental Soils, LLC
Adjunct Professor, St. Joseph's University**

Good morning. My name is Catherine Sorace. I am a Certified Professional Soil Scientist and Vice-President of the Pennsylvania Association of Professional Soil Scientists. I am the owner of PennWood Environmental Soils, LLC and an adjunct professor at St. Joseph's University.

Two of the focus areas in my consulting business are Nutrient Management planning and identification of wetland, or hydric soils.

Nutrient Management planning falls under Pennsylvania Act 38 which requires that farmers who are applying manure, biosolids or residential sewage are doing so in an environmentally responsible manner, while maximizing crop yields. Using soil testing, mapping and site evaluations, I am able to assist these farmers not only in complying with State and Federal regulations, but help them reduce their fertilizer costs, get better crop yields and therefore better returns on their investments. This in turn reduces nutrient runoff into the Waters of the Commonwealth and into the watersheds where they drain, particularly the Chesapeake Bay. I just recently worked with a farmer who has been under investigation by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection due to his manure spreading practices along the Susquehanna River. I was able to help him



come into compliance with State regulations without adding additional financial hardships to his operation.

Another major focus in my soils consulting work involves identifying hydric or wetland soils. Wetlands are important in flood control, water quality improvement, and of course for wildlife habitat. The protocols for describing, identifying and mapping hydric soils can only be completed by an experienced soil scientist. Several years ago I evaluated a 165 acre abandoned industrial site to determine if the site could be used as a replacement wetland. A proposed construction site nearby would be impacting a natural wetland area and the abandoned industrial site, if approved would mitigate the damage to be done at the construction site. In order to establish a new wetland area, the soils must be suitable to allow wetland vegetation to be established and maintained. Because of proper soil evaluations, this property will become a wetland area that will not only replace wetland functions lost to development, but will provide a new role for an abandoned site, provide work in the area, and allows the completion of the development project.

Professional licensing of soil scientists will insure that there will be an educated, trained and experienced professional on these jobs who is up to date on current developments in soil science and that the consumer can be confident that ethical and professional standards will be upheld.

Thank you.