



MICHIGAN ASLA

MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

May 10, 2007

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Governor of Michigan
State Capitol
PO Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Granholm:

On Friday May 4, 2007, you issued Executive Order 2007-23 abolishing the Board of Landscape Architects. I am writing as the president of the Michigan Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (MASLA) and as a business owner to request that you consider rescinding this order. We are all painfully aware of the current budget crises, but I believe that the order will be counterproductive to our shared goals of supporting Michigan's businesses and making Michigan a great place to do business. And you will find that, as landscape architects, we are more than willing to pay our fair share of the cost of governance.

MASLA has been working diligently over the past couple of years to change our professional regulation from that of a registered profession to that of a licensed profession. As one of only eight remaining states in the country where landscape architects are not a licensed profession, Michigan landscape architects are at a competitive disadvantage when seeking work in other states. By working with architects, engineers and landscape contractors this past year, our licensure bills were passed unanimously by the Senate; we simply ran out of time in the lame duck session to get the bill through the House. However, we have currently introduced Senate Bills 382 and 383 which have been well received by all of the legislators with whom we have discussed it during our recent lobby day at the State Capitol. We hope to soon have the same legislation introduced in the House.

As part of our bill, we readily agreed to the Department of Labor and Economic Growth's recommended fee increase for the profession based on their analysis of the cost to support licensure for landscape architects. Currently the 635 some registered landscape architects in Michigan generate approximately \$26,000 a year in state revenue. Under our proposed legislation this will jump to at least \$38,000 per year. In fact, MASLA believes the number of licensed landscape architects will increase because of the legislation meaning even more fees to the state of Michigan. We feel that is more than enough to cover the administrative costs of overseeing our profession and an occasional board meeting. Also, working with DLEG we have crafted what they consider model continuing education language that is dependent on the Board of Landscape Architects for creation and implementation.

While landscape architecture may be a relatively low profile profession, I can assure you that our work is not. We are the driving force behind many of the programs that you support, such as:

- Cool Cities
- Healthy Livable Communities
- Safe Routes to Schools
- Sustainable Design

We are the creative class that designs our parks, downtown streetscapes, greenways and trails. We are leading the way with innovative, functional and beautiful storm water management designs. We run the public workshops where communities envision a brighter future. And like many landscape architects, I sit on numerous committees working to improve the livability of our state. My volunteer time includes the Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee of your Transportation Safety Task Force. Our work not only effects the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of this state; it is critical to our economic and environmental sustainability of our future.

Michigan State University and the University of Michigan are home to two of the nation's most respected landscape architecture programs. We strive to retain the best and brightest graduates in this state. This challenge is already compounded by our current registration status. With the overwhelming majority of the other states making landscape architecture a licensed profession, we have witnessed many of our youngest and brightest graduates moving to states where the profession is licensed. MASLA believes abolishing the Board of Landscape Architecture will send the wrong message to our current students and our future landscape architects. If we were to become the only state in the country without a Board of Landscape Architecture, MASLA fears the future of our profession here in Michigan would be devalued.

Attached you will find a brochure that highlights some of the types of work landscape architects do throughout the State of Michigan as well as information on our current legislation. We recognize that these are challenging times and that tough decisions need to be made. But what differentiates our Board is that we are self sustaining, and our Board is key to helping landscape architects in Michigan remain competitive nationally.

Please do not hesitate to have your staff contact me to discuss this matter further. As a Registered Landscape Architect (RLA), I look forward to resolving this constructively with you and your staff and continuing to work towards our shared goals.

Respectfully,

Norman D. Cox, ASLA, RLA
President, Michigan Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects