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TO: Board Members
FROM: Staff
SUBJECT: Consideration of changes to the commercial applicator and dealer examination and licensing process

As we move towards development of an online portal for licensing, enforcement and compliance, Pega Systems and Maine Office of Information Technology (OIT) staff have been helping us with process management. As we follow the process for identifying our work flow and discover the complexity of our licensing rules we often identify areas that could be adjusted to make the whole process run smoother. One such area is the commercial applicator and pesticide dealer licensing and recertification process.

Currently, commercial applicators are certified for a six year period and must renew their license every two years. On the sixth year commercial applicators must have proof of attendance for the necessary 18 (Master) or 12 (Operator) recertification credits. Pesticide dealers are certified for five years and must renew their license every year. On the fifth year pesticide dealers must have proof of attendance for the necessary 15 recertification credits.

This setup requires fairly complicated programming to make sure no person can renew a license without meeting the certification requirements.

The staff would like discuss the idea of changing the license and certification periods so they match, making it similar to the Private Applicator and Agricultural Basic Applicator process. Both of those licenses and certifications are good for a maximum of three years and expire at the same time.

If you decided to make the commercial applicator and pesticide dealer licenses three-year licenses with concurrent three-year certifications, it would make the programming much easier and also make it easier for applicators and dealers to know when their recertification credits are due. A few licensees get confused by the certification period that is not synchronized with the license expiration.

If you do change these rules, the staff believes it could be done as routine technical rules as long as you do not change the fee or credit requirements. Therefore, if you go to a three-year license renewal the fee would rise from \$70.00 to \$105.00 and the credits would change from 18 to 9 for Masters, 12 to 6 for Operators and from 15 to 9 for Pesticide Dealers.

One drawback to this setup is the loss of more frequent contact with constituents for address, email or telephone number updates. We will still need to make sure we get the annual reports from both Commercial Master Applicators and Pesticide Dealers.

Another area suggested for streamlining is the requirement for an expiration date on exams. Currently the rules require a private or commercial applicator to pass a core and commodity or category exam or else one or the other will expire within one calendar year. Keeping this requirement makes for additional programming in the new licensing system. The staff would like to discuss the merits of this policy and whether we could allow that requirement to drop.

We look forward to your comments and ideas on this topic.