



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS

Carlton Williams Sr., *Commissioner*

May 6, 2015

Hon. Mauree Gingrich
Chair, House Committee on Labor and Industry
106 Ryan Office Building
PO Box 202101
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2101

Dear Chairwoman Gingrich:

On behalf of the City of Philadelphia, please accept this written testimony on HB 782, sponsored by Representative Hefley.

The City of Philadelphia has authorized the use of third-party agencies by the public for electrical code inspections for decades. It has done so through the establishment of a local license requirement. Such licenses are granted to these electrical inspection agencies upon meeting certain requirements established by local code and in conformance with the PA Uniform Construction Code Act (UCC). Each year, we maintain between 8 and 12 licensed third-party electrical inspection agencies. These licenses are subject to an annual renewal.

We support the basic premise of HB 782 in providing a choice to owners and developers who are required by municipalities to utilize the services of a third-party agency to confirm compliance with the UCC.

However, we are requesting a technical amendment to the Bill beginning in Line 2 of Page 2 as follows:

A municipality may enter into agreements with construction code officials *or* *third-party agencies* to perform plan review and inspection services for categories which the municipal code official does not have the resources or certification to perform

The UCC's definition of "construction code official" refers to an individual. Therefore as proposed in this section above, it could be interpreted that municipalities like Philadelphia, who

utilize the services of third party agencies to perform plan review and inspection services in specialized areas, would be precluded from doing so and thus would need to comply with the proposed changes of Section 501 (b.1).

The public vetting process by which municipalities retain third-party code enforcement services, currently imposed by Section 501 (b.1) of HB 782, seems too specific and overly burdensome, particularly for those municipalities which already maintain a public process for approving services by multiple third-party agencies. The processes outlined in HB 782 for establishing a professional services contract through requests for proposal, public advertisement and public meetings is more appropriate for those municipalities who choose to contract directly with only one third-party agency.

The City of Philadelphia respectfully requests that the General Assembly consider our proposed technical amendment. We believe it provides for the appropriate clarity.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Fink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Fink
Deputy Commissioner

cc Representative Marc J. Gergely, Democratic Chair
House Committee on Labor and Industry