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February 5, 2016

Dear Chairwoman Harhart and Chairman Readshaw and the members of the Professional Licensure Committee:

My name is Timothy J Brink and I am the Executive Vice President of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Eastern PA (MCAEPA) that represents over 65 of our areas largest plumbing and mechanical contractors.

I am writing to you in support of House Bill No. 1357 for State Licensing for all plumbers performing work in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

This legislation would provide assurance for consumers of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that any individual offering plumbing services to the public are, in fact, qualified to do so, by allowing a consumer to search a State website of only licensed, trained and registered plumbers and plumbing contractors. The passing of this legislation would enhance the registration currently being done by the office of the State Attorney General, thereby creating a more effective two-tiered system.

The passing of this bill will also bring Pennsylvania in line with the other 44 states that already have established state licensing of plumbers in place. In fact, the majority of states that border Pennsylvania require plumbing contractors to be licensed, and many of the townships and municipalities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania accept these licenses from other states, creating an unfair system on one-way reciprocity. Pennsylvania plumbers are at a disadvantage when attempting to work in neighboring states because of our lack of a licensing infrastructure. As a result, Pennsylvania plumbers are effectively penalized, while the Commonwealth allows out-of-state plumbers to work here freely, provided they are licensed in their home state.

House Bill 1357 will also have a great economic impact for Pennsylvania consumers. By creating a centralized licensing system, monies collected from licensing of plumbers can be utilized by the Commonwealth toward various programs for the elderly, youth and other groups. Furthermore, this bill assists consumers by reducing their cost for plumbing services, since it eliminates the need for plumbers to purchase multiple licenses in various townships. Additionally, reciprocity between neighboring states will lead to more money coming into the Commonwealth by removing a known barrier Pennsylvania plumbers face in pursuing more work opportunities outside of the state.

Finally, the important issue of public safety needs to be addressed. Currently, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania oversees the licensing of an array of professions where there is potential for public or individual harm. Yet, the plumbing profession is ripe with potential dangers by unskilled and unlicensed workers who put the safety of our public drinking water at risk with faulty or incorrect plumbing practices. They also put individual consumers at great risk of personal injury from bursting pipes, scalding, contaminants and more. In addition, there are negative environmental impacts caused by unlicensed individuals through improper disposal of waste and plumbing byproducts.

Our industry is one which needs and actually desires greater governmental regulation for all the reasons detailed above. In closing, I ask you to please support passing House Bill 1357 as I strongly feel it is in the best interest of all concerned – skilled and trained plumbers, consumers within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Commonwealth itself.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the view point held by the members of MCAEPA.

If you should have any questions or need more information please feel free to contact me at 610-940-4999.

Yours truly,

Timothy J Brink  
Executive Vice President.