



Testimony of Dan Wise, CGP, CGB  
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Uniform Construction Code Task Force  
Before the Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
Environmental Resources & Energy Committee  
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Good morning. I would like to thank Chairman Miller and the members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify this morning. My name is Dan Wise, and I am the owner of Wise Construction, based in Boalsburg, PA. I also serve as chairman of the Pennsylvania Builders Association (PBA) Uniform Construction Code (UCC) Task Force, and it is in that capacity that I am pleased to address you this morning regarding House Bill 343.

PBA understands the goals of House Bill 343 and its predecessor (House Bill 1855) from the previous legislative session. Housing industry professionals routinely design, build and install practices that protect Pennsylvania's environmental quality before, during and after construction, and certainly ensuring the safety of drinking water from residential wells is one of the most important. However, as with the previous incarnation of this bill, PBA believes that a superior alternative is to craft language that keeps small private water wells under the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania UCC. We would also like to highlight the following concerns:

- The bill will not have any impact on older wells constructed in Pennsylvania over the past 200 or more years, in which potential problems connected to bacteria are much more common than wells drilled and constructed to today's industry standards. Pennsylvania well drillers are currently licensed under the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and have guidelines established by DCNR and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that are commonly used in the industry.
- Additionally, water wells in Pennsylvania are currently regulated. Water wells are regulated under the UCC, the International Residential Code (IRC), and the International Plumbing Code (IPC). PBA, state building code officials, and the ICC all agree that the language found in the UPC, IRC and IPC is a reasonable basis to define the relevant standards for safe drinking water and well construction. Any attempt to further regulate wells would require an amendment to the Pennsylvania UCC. PBA previously offered language to be included in HB 1855 that would have strengthened the standards already found in the UCC to increase protection for Pennsylvania residents who will rely on well water for their homes.

- PBA is not agreeable to any language that gives DEP the authority to develop a presently-unknown set of standards, to be written sometime in the future, for well construction in Pennsylvania. The likely result of such an effort would be increased costs for Pennsylvanians who will rely on well water for their homes. At the same time, DEP officials have, on previous occasions, acknowledged that they do not have the resources to enforce such standards if they were to be developed. By allowing the Department of Labor & Industry to regulate this procedure for residential projects only, it can be incorporated into the permit and approval procedures that are already in place at no extra expense.

PBA believes that a better solution for Pennsylvania's residential water wells is to keep them under the UCC regulations and work to develop enhanced standards for water quality, well construction and decommissioning that could be amended into the existing HB 343 to replace the current standards in the UCC. These standards would be developed from existing respected sources in this field, including the National Groundwater Association (NGWA), which is currently working with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) on the "ANSI/NGWA Water Well Construction Standard." These standards would be enforced by a certification from a well driller that all requirements have been met, which would be part of the water well completion report. When completed, this standard could serve as a framework for a standard that serves Pennsylvania's needs on a statewide basis.

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Builders Association and the more than 255,000 members and employees it represents, I thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and would be happy to take your questions.