



**PLUMBING-HEATING-COOLING
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December 9, 2015

The Honorable Julie Harhart, Chairwoman
Committee on Professional Licensure
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Harry Readshaw, Chairman
Committee on Professional Licensure
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Support of HB 1357, State Licensure of Plumbers

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

The Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors—National Association (PHCC) supports the Pennsylvania Association of Plumbing, Heating & Cooling Contractor's (PAPHCC) endorsement of HB 1357, State Licensure of Plumbers. The bill provides for plumbing contractor state licensure – establishes the State Board of Plumbing Contractors – establishes fees, fines and civil penalties – and creates the Plumbing Contractors Licensure Account.

PAPHCC represents the interests of plumbing, heating and cooling industry professionals within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We at the PHCC – National Association, support their efforts to promote legislation to protect Pennsylvania's consumers by ensuring that plumbing, heating and cooling contractors in Pennsylvania are properly trained and educated to ensure the health, safety, and comfort of society and the protection of the environment. Licensed plumbing, heating and cooling contractors in Pennsylvania would inherently seek to protect Pennsylvania's water supply, ensure sanitation safety, and provide high quality workmanship, and do so with a high standard of professional integrity.

Enclosed are key points of support for the legislation, as provided by PAPHCC. Please reach out if you have additional questions or need additional information. Thank you for your consideration of our support for PAPHCC's endorsement of HB 1357.

More about The PHCC-National Association:

Formed in 1883, PHCC provides legislative advocacy, education and training to more than 2,700 plumbing and HVACR businesses who employ 70,000 skilled professionals. Please go to www.phccweb.org for more information.

Sincerely,

Charles E. "Chip" Greene, President
Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors—National Association

Attachment



KEY ISSUES IN SUPPORT FOR STATE WIDE LICENSURE FOR PLUMBERS IN PENNSYLVANIA

- Pennsylvania is only one of six states in the country that does not have a state license for plumbers.
 - **HB 1357** is supported by labor and open shop contractors.
 - For over ten years, the plumbing industry in Pennsylvania has worked toward a consistent method of licensing of plumbers.
 - **HB 1357** was initially introduced as a “Practice Act” then converted to a “Title Act” at the request of some labor organizations and special interest groups.
 - **HB 1357** would not disrupt or change any existing practices of work jurisdiction or job assignment.
 - **HB 1357** would not disrupt or change any existing practices of job or work permitting. If a task currently does not require a plumbing permit, **HB 1357** would not change these requirements. To clarify, **HB 1357** does not involve permitting or permit requirements. The legislation only allows those licensed as plumbers to advertise and present themselves as qualified.
 - A key component of this legislation is “reciprocity.” Each state that borders Pennsylvania has a state license. Because Pennsylvania does not have a state license or any other consistent method of licensing plumbers, Pennsylvania contractors cannot cross state lines to adjoining states to bid on or secure work. The surrounding states also make it very difficult for Pennsylvania contractors to obtain licenses in these states. Conversely, most municipalities and townships in Pennsylvania recognize and grant licenses to contractors from the surrounding states with the knowledge that the contractors have met all the requirements for their respective state’s licensing structure. **HB 1357** would allow for a level playing surface and give the Commonwealth a mechanism to deny out of state contractors the right to work in Pennsylvania if their home state does not offer the same benefit to Pennsylvania contractors.
 - **HB 1357** contains a liberal “grandfathering” section. Contractors currently installing plumbing, in most cases, will receive a license without testing.
 - An economic factor to consider - many companies spend thousands of dollars each year to purchase licenses in each township, borough, and county in which they conduct business. **HB 1357** would require only one license state wide. This would be a significant cost savings to the contractor, and the savings would be passed on to the consumer.
 - **HB 1357** would potentially generate millions of dollars annually for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in licensing fees. These funds could be used for schools, after school programs, day care, and assistance for the elderly - just to name a few.
 - **HB 1357** would enhance the HIC registration within the State Attorney General’s Office. It would add an additional layer of protection for all consumers. Consumers would have the ability to verify (via a state website) if a contractor is licensed and qualified to provide the services they are offering. It would stop the dangerous practice by some townships and boroughs from issuing permits to contractors with an HIC number and not a trade specific license. This practice exposes the consumer to great economic, health, and safety risks.
 - **HB 1357** will help to ensure that the rights, health, safety and economic well-being of all citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are protected. **HB 1357** will help to ensure safe drinking water for everyone as well as the ethical disposal of waste while protecting the environment.
 - The mission of the plumbing industry is “plumbers protect the health and safety of the nation.” We as professionals in our craft feel the same sense of duty to protect the public and the environment – as do our elected officials.
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