



Pennsylvania Municipal League
President – Salvatore J. Panto, Jr., Mayor, City of Easton



Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners
President – Michael Higgins, Commissioner, Aston Township

MEMO

To: The Honorable Members of the House Labor and Industry Committee
From: Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, PML and PSATC
Date: March 19, 2019
Re: House Bill 349 (PN 326)

On behalf of the membership of the PA Municipal League (The League) and the PA State Association of Township Commissioners (PSATC), please accept this memo as written comment for the March 20, 2019, hearing on House Bill 349 (PN 326).

The League and PSATC continue to be opposed to the mandate in House Bill 349 that expands the number of third-party UCC inspectors that must be available in a municipality. Currently, it is a local decision to provide permit applicants with a choice of more than one third-party inspector and we believe that decision should remain local.

Offering more than one inspector requires a municipality to expand its oversight of UCC inspections. Applicants will naturally shop for the inspector that will provide them with the best result. This jeopardizes the duty of local government to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public and requires additional oversight to ensure the UCC is applied consistently throughout a community. Local government officials need to preserve the flexibility and authority to decide locally if they want to expand their UCC program beyond one third-party inspector, not be forced into expansion.

This proposal has taken many forms over the last several sessions and we appreciate the improvements that have been made. We recognize that this version reduces the number of third-party inspectors required to two, but it is nonetheless, a mandate. And, while we understand consumer choice to be the reason behind the mandate, we believe most issues can be resolved through the complaint and appeals process already in the law. Applicants who believe improper decisions have been made or that excessive fees have been charged have avenues for complaint and those avenues can be made more apparent with the notice requirements proposed in House Bill 349.

Thank you for the invitation to provide written comments.