



Testimony of Douglas Meshaw,
PA UCC Consultant, Pennsylvania Builders Association
Before the Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Labor & Industry Committee
March 20, 2019

Good morning. I would like to thank Chairman Cox, Chairman Harkins, and the members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify this morning. My name is Douglas Meshaw, and I am the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code consultant for the Pennsylvania Builders Association.

In March of 2015, PBA's Board of Directors met and approved legislative priorities aimed at fixing multiple problems with the current administration and enforcement of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) as it relates to the use of Third-Party Agency (TPA) code inspection services. As I sit here in 2019 these legislative priorities have not changed. I would like to read those motions to you now, so there can be no confusion on PBA's official position:

- PBA supports legislation to require municipalities that do not have a municipal employee dedicated to plan or inspection duties under the UCC to contract with at least two third party agencies to provide inspection and plan review services;
- PBA supports legislation to require an open bidding process for municipalities who contract with third party agencies to administer the UCC;
- PBA supports legislation to strengthen the Department of Labor and Industry's complaint review process regarding all building code official actions and professional behavior in their administration and enforcement of the UCC; and
- PBA supports legislation that creates standards of accountability relating to fees charged for inspection and plan review services under the UCC.

Construction code officials in Pennsylvania have police powers inasmuch as they have the authority to shut down worksites, deny occupancy permits, repeatedly fail inspections, and condemn structures they deem to be unsafe. They also have the authority to approve an alternative material, design or method of construction if the proposed design is satisfactory and complies with the intent of the UCC. Each code inspector in Pennsylvania is allowed substantial latitude to "interpret" the UCC and the required building code provisions.