

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Local 1547

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KNUTE ANDERSON
PRESIDENT



February 2, 2018

To: Chair and members of House Labor & Commerce Committee

Re: HB 255 Plumbing/Electrical Certificate of Fitness

Honorable committee members:

First of all, thank you for the opportunity for public testimony on this bill.

I am writing this letter in support of HB 255 because it makes enforcement of COF requirements more reasonable for the AK Department of Labor. This is necessary to ensure legal installations for plumbing and electrical work throughout the state.

With this bill reducing penalties from a misdemeanor to a citation, it is a fairer bill from a worker's standpoint. Its fairness is further enhanced by penalizing the employer and not just the employee for work that is performed without a COF.

I've heard some concern while in the halls of the Capitol about this bill going after the worker. I would strongly disagree that is the case. This bill does the right thing by seeking to facilitate enforcement where work is performed illegally. If workers do not want to be penalized, then they simply should not be performing certificated work without the proper COF.

My reasoning here is based on the same reasoning for requiring COFs which is absolutely about SAFETY. The protection of life and property is the main purpose behind the codes followed by plumbers and electricians, and I believe this bill is directly in line with those objectives.

We urge you to vote in favor of this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration with this matter.

Respectfully,

Rodney Hesson
Assistant Business Manager
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Juneau office

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February 2, 2018

RE: HB 255 Plumbing/Electrical Certificate of Fitness

Dear Chairman and Members of Labor of Commerce Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public testimony.

I am writing in support of HB 255 because I believe it maintains safety standards, provides essential consumer protections and is good public policy.

First, it streamlines the process and gives the Alaska Department of Labor Office of Mechanical Inspection the ability to deal with violators in a quick and cost-effective manner. Currently, there is virtually no way to enforce willful or repeat offenders. People in the industry have realized there are no teeth in enforcement and continue to operate with impunity knowing they cannot be stopped. The Department of Labor can either write a cease and desist letter or go through the expensive and cumbersome process of asking a district attorney to prosecute for a misdemeanor. This bill provides a very low-cost enforcement tool for the department and uses proven tools similar to contractor licensing enforcement with an appeal process.

Secondly, by requiring a Certificate of Fitness, this bill ensures that work is done by a qualified and trained professional. It gives the consumer the guarantee that the work being done is not substandard and dangerous, thus ensuring the protection of both lives and property.

On behalf of the more than 4,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers statewide, I urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Dave Reaves
Business Manager
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