

Mid-East Ohio Building Department

Chairman Ron Young
Economic Development, Commerce, and Labor
77 S. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

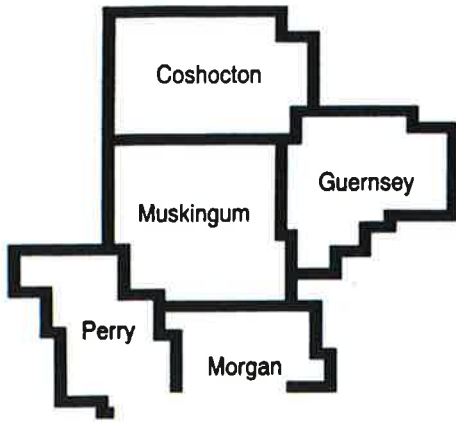
May 17, 2017

Chairman Young,

Good afternoon. My name is Jason Baughman and I am the Chief Building Official for The Mid-East Ohio Building Department located in Zanesville, Ohio. Our department is responsible for enforcing the non-residential Ohio Building Code in Muskingum, Coshocton, Guernsey, Morgan and Perry counties. Today I was made aware of House Bill 128 that would permit General Contractor's to contract with third party inspectors to inspect their projects. I wanted to send you a letter to voice my concerns about this Bill passing.

My first concern is that the General Contractor or Owner can pick their inspector and pay them directly. I believe this would be a conflict of interest on the inspector's part to be directly in contract with the entity they are responsible for inspecting. Construction needs to be monitored and inspected objectively to ensure the work matches the approved construction documents. Allowing the inspectors to be selected and employed by the General Contractor is no different than allowing Generals to self-certify their work. The Building Code's purpose is to "protect public health, safety, and general welfare as they relate to construction..." HB 128 hampers this purpose by placing emphasis on ease of the construction process over the accuracy of the construction process (as it relates to the approved construction drawings).

My second concern is how the Chief Building Official can be responsible for the projects in their jurisdiction. The inspection reports will all come across the CBO's desk for review and issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy. The CBO's name will be on the C/O that essentially says that all the work was completed in compliance with the approved construction documents. This signature, or responsibility, is made based on inspectors that have no connection to the CBO. The CBO did not hire or train the inspector and is expected to sign off on the C/O based on the report of a individual employed by the General Contractor or owner. I know that the inspector would be required to meet all Board of Building



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Standards requirements to be an inspector, but without a chain of command back to the CBO, the Certificate of Occupancy is nothing more than a statement that construction has ceased.

I can only speculate as to the circumstances that have led to HB 128 and, while there may be issues to be resolved, I don't believe that blurring responsibility lines and shifting the employ of the inspectors to the General Contractors/Owners is a solution that promotes the purpose of the Building Code. I believe HB 128 promotes the TIMELINESS of the construction process but provides too many opportunities for timeliness to be chosen over following the approved drawings (i.e. quality).

Thank you for your time. I sincerely hope that HB 128 does not pass.

Jason R. Baughman, P.E.
Chief Building Official
740.455.7905