



# OHIO BUILDING OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION



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The Honorable Scott Lipps  
Chair, House Health Committee  
77 S High St Fl 13  
Columbus OH 43215

*Via e-mail willa.bluestone@ohiohouse.gov & rep62@ohiohouse.gov*

SUBJECT: Proponent Testimony on HB 247, Plumbing Inspector Certification  
Consolidation

1. Introduction. Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the committee, my name is Charles Huber and I serve on the Ohio Building Officials' Association (OBOA) Legislation Committee. Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony on House Bill 247 (HB 247). OBOA is a professional organization consisting of over 800 members most of whom work in State, county, city, and township jurisdictions administering construction rules adopted pursuant to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 4781 & 4791 by Ohio Board of Building Standards (BBS) [Ohio Building Code (OBC), Ohio Mechanical Code (OMC), Ohio Plumbing Code (OPC), and Residential Code of Ohio (RCO) Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 4101:1, 4101:2, 4101:3, & 4101:8]. Our membership also includes private sector architects, professional engineers, other construction designers, and construction contractors.
2. Intentional Duplication of Sub HB 110. I remind the Committee that HB 247 Sponsor Rep Brigid Kelly's testimony April 20, 2021 shows HB 247's provisions currently are in Sub HB 110, the biennial budget bill. OBOA requested Rep Kelly and Thomas West proceed with HB 247 in case these provisions were deleted from Sub HB 110.
3. Chair Lipps' April 20, 2021 Question, "Why House Health Committee?" During HB 247 Sponsor Testimony April 20, 2021 Chair Lipps asked why plumbing inspector certification consolidation was before the House Health Committee. I'll provide an answer.

4. Ohio Department of Health (ODH). Up to the early 1990's statute vested ODH with developing and adopting Ohio's plumbing rules [Ohio Plumbing Code (OPC) (OAC 4101:3)] and the certification of personnel in local health districts/departments inspecting plumbing work under those rules (OPC).
5. ODH & Ohio Board of Building Standards (BBS) During the 1990's statute was revised moving authority to adopt and maintain OPC (OAC 4101:3) from ODH to the Ohio Board of Building Standards, which today's within the Department of Commerce. BBS was and continues to certify personnel within county and municipal governments administering the mechanical code (regulating heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) and building codes. However, authority to certify local health district/department personnel enforcing OPC landed in the Department of Commerce's Division of Industrial Compliance (DIC). In 2003 pursuant to DIC legal opinion it ceased certifying plumbing inspectors in municipal governments and BBS started certifying those plumbing inspectors.
6. Inefficiencies and Burdens. Existing statute perpetuates an unnecessarily duplication of personnel certification and the continuing education courses offered by entities for those personnel to maintain their certification.
  - a. Personnel certified by BBS to work in municipalities aren't certified to take a position in a local health district/department or a county contracted by the local health district/department and vice versa.
  - b. An entity who develops a continuing education course approved by BBS to satisfy recertification requirements for persons working in municipalities enforcing OPC must also get it approved by DIC if it's to be valid for persons in local health districts/departments and counties contracted by those local health districts/departments enforcing OPC and vice/versa.
7. Conclusion: Consolidation of the existing two certification processes is a logical step in the legislative evolution of Ohio's plumbing rules. It increases efficiency of the certification function and the enforcement of Ohio's plumbing rules (Ohio Plumbing Code) by municipalities, local health districts/departments, and counties. Consolidation increases the portability of these certified personnel between these local jurisdictions. This increases these local governments' ability to provide this vital public service. I'm happy to take questions from the Committee.