Historical Boilers Licensing Board

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, my name is Aaron Johnston, and I am here today to provide information on the Historical Boilers Licensing Board.

Historical boilers are defined as steam boilers of *riveted* construction that are preserved, restored, or maintained for hobby or demonstration purposes only. Originally, this board which was created to regulate these devices, when displayed in certain settings, was established following a catastrophic accident at a County Fair in 2001, which resulted in 5 fatalities and dozens of injuries to the public. After functioning for the better part of two decades, the Board was then abolished on April 12, 2021, by House Bill 442 of the 133rd General Assembly. After further consideration, roughly five months later, the Board was reestablished, effective September 30, 2021, by House Bill 110 of the 134th General Assembly when section 4104.33 was reenacted.

The reasons the Board was originally created remain valid today: to protect the safety of both the operator and the public at large. Operators are licensed to ensure that they have sufficient education, training, and experience to safely and competently operate historical boilers in places open to the public, as well as the knowledge of how to respond to emergency situations like low-water events while operating those boilers.

The standards to become an operator neatly balance the minimum burden on applicants while still protecting the public. To become a licensed historical boiler operator, an individual must complete a board-approved historical boiler operator's course, have at least 100 hours of operating experience or training with historical boilers, pass an exam, and pay a one-time fee of $50. Since its inception, the Board has issued 722 licenses to operate historical boilers, and all of those licenses are valid for the lifetime of the operator.

In addition to traditional licensing functions, the seven-member board adopts rules concerning the inspection, operation, repair, and maintenance of

historical boilers. The Board meets semi-annually with each meeting lasting roughly two hours.

The Board does not have a dedicated budget or staff. Instead, to increase efficiency and reduce costs, the Ohio Department of Commerce's Division of Industrial Compliance provides staff and support to the Board, and the expenses and revenues for the Board's program are included in the Division's budget. Roughly seven staff members in the Division support the operation of the Board and several boiler inspectors perform work in the field inspecting historical boilers.

Expenses for the board are limited to compensating board members for their actual expenses accrued in attending board meeting. The Division's Chief Boiler Inspector, as an employee of Division, however, does not have expenses covered for attendance. Of the remaining members, annual expenses for attendance of board meetings total $1,372. Average revenue generated from Board activities is negligible, typically averaging $550 per year.

At least one other state specifically licenses historical boiler operators, that being Minnesota. The Board has entered into a reciprocity agreement with Minnesota, whereby each state recognizes the other's licensing of historical boiler operators. The licensing and renewal requirements in Minnesota are substantially equivalent to those in Ohio. The amount of regulation exercised by Ohio's Board appears comparable to that of other states that require historical boiler related licenses and inspections as well.

In summary, the Historical Boilers Board is not believed to have inhibited economic growth, reduced efficiency, or impacted the ability of individuals seeking to enter an occupation or profession. Historical boiler regulations are tailored to be the minimum requirements necessary to safely operate historical boilers in public.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present information on this board, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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