



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

TOM LARSON

Testimony on Assembly Bill 190 June 10, 2015

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of Assembly Bill 190.

Last session, the Legislature passed 2013 Act 143, which included, among other things, language exempting electricians who satisfy certain age and experience criteria from having to be licensed as a master or journeyman electrician or enrolled as a registered (formerly called beginning) electrician. A “grandfathered” electrician would instead receive an alternative license. The main purpose for this exemption was to allow qualifying electricians to continue to work without having to take the licensing exam, which can be a challenge, especially when you have not taken a test in years.

My personal preference would have been to allow no grandfathering at all, but the inclusion of this exemption was necessary in order to get Act 143 passed so that the overall electrician licensing program could finally take effect. However it was always my expectation that the Department of Safety and Professional Services would use its rulemaking power to impose the same requirements on grandfathered electricians as it does on other electrical licenses, including renewal periods and – most importantly – continuing education. If you are an electrician, it is essential that you keep current on developments in the trade, including updates to the National Electrical Code. Otherwise, your work may be an accident waiting to happen, and the results can be deadly.

I was disappointed with the rules DSPS ultimately produced, as were many stakeholders with whom I had worked on Act 143. The rules recognize “registered master electricians” – not to be confused with licensed master electricians – and grant them the authority to do the same work as licensed masters. However “registered masters” are only required to pay a one-time fee, and their registration is good forever; the rules also do not require them to take continuing education. By offering a cheap, lifetime credential with no obligation to take continuing education courses, these rules create an incentive for qualifying electricians, including those who are currently licensed, to switch over to “registered masters”. I think that is a bad idea, even though I myself would qualify.

AB 190 spells out what I had intended all along. Under the bill, grandfathered electricians will have to renew their license every four years, just like licensed master electricians, and they will be subject to the same renewal fees and continuing education requirements as licensed masters. In addition, AB 190 will close the door on new applications for grandfather licenses. I expect that any electrician who qualified for the exemption and wished to apply for it has already done so. I would also like to think that many more electricians who qualify for the exemption



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recognize the value of going through the process of earning an actual license – including taking the exam – and doing what is necessary to maintain it.

AB 190 also requires licensed or registered electricians to satisfy continuing education requirements established by DSPS. They are already required to do so by rule, but the statutes are largely silent about continuing education requirements for electricians, and I thought it was important to make the requirement statutory.

Thank you for your consideration. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Alliance for Regulatory Coordination

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 190 Before the Assembly Committee on Labor

June 10, 2015

Good Afternoon!

I am Bob DuPont, founder of the Alliance for Regulatory Coordination.

The ARC is a consortium of 16 business, professional, trade and advocacy organizations involved in building design, construction and regulatory services. The Alliance seeks regulatory services provided in the most efficient manner possible to effectively promote the health, safety and welfare of Wisconsin citizens and visitors.

The Alliance for Regulatory Coordination supports Assembly Bill 190. We support continuing education as a method of promoting electrical safety because it helps electricians stay informed about advances in technology, construction methods, code requirements and state law.

We believe Assembly Bill 190 reflects what most interested parties expected as the outcome of 2013 Wisconsin Act 143, the original electrician grandfathering legislation. AB 190 will promote safety in a more balanced manner than the way current law has been implemented. It recognizes grandfathering of experienced electricians, but also recognizes the need for all electricians to obtain continuing education in order to better promote safety related to electrical systems and the use of electricity.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this Bill. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Please see reverse side for list of Alliance members.

Alliance for Regulatory Coordination

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Alliance for Regulatory Coordination

Classic Members

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International Association of Electrical Inspectors, Wisconsin Chapter
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National Electrical Contractors Association, Wisconsin Chapter
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Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors, Wisconsin Association
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