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The Wisconsin State Legislature
Wisconsin State Capitol
Madison, WI 53078

Dear Wisconsin State Legislators,

I have read Representative Christine Sinicki's and Senator Spencer Cogg's proposed legislation, AB 102 and SB 94, a bill to develop and institute standards and licensing for the craftsmen who apply mechanical insulation to the mechanical systems, pipes, ducts, tanks, etc., in buildings across our state; which is involved in air quality control.

Because shoddy and substandard workmanship in the mechanical insulation trade could lead to "sweating" mechanical systems, and perhaps the formation and collecting of condensation, that develops as a result if shoddy or substandard mechanical insulation work on the mechanical systems, an ideal environment for mold growth and fungal contamination could be established.

We have seen a number of patients who develop mold allergies in relationship to defects in HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning, involves mechanical insulation) workmanship.

Thus, the development of training and standards in the mechanical insulation industry would, in my opinion, be beneficial to the Citizens of Wisconsin and play a role in keeping them healthy.

Sincerely,

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AB 102 (Rep. Sinicki) and SB 94 (Sen. Coggs) Thermal System Insulation Legislation

What do Thermal System Insulators do? Professional thermal system insulation mechanics install and maintain thermal system insulation in buildings. They install insulation around mechanical systems (air conditioning systems, heating systems and plumbing systems). They do *not* install insulation products in the walls of buildings, commonly referred to as 'batts or blown insulation'.

What is thermal system insulation? Thermal system insulation is used to insulate any hot or cold surface, including a pipe, duct, valve, boiler, flue, tank, or equipment on (or in) a building's heating, ventilating, cooling, plumbing and/or refrigeration system.

Are thermal system insulators professionally trained? While thermal system insulators are *not* currently licensed or regulated by the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has approved Apprenticeship Standards for thermal system insulation installation. Many of the state's thermal system insulators have completed one of the approved apprenticeship programs. However, many other people who install thermal system insulation products have *not* been professionally trained or have *not* completed the state-approved apprenticeship program.

What are some of the problems that can result from improper installation of Thermal System Insulation products? The most publicized and most commonly occurring consequence from improperly installing thermal system insulation products is the occurrence of *mold*. Another common (and dangerous) consequence of the improper installation of these products is *structural damage to buildings*. A third common consequence is *system failure* (heat or air conditioning systems shutting down). And a fourth consequence is *overall health problems* affecting the people who work or live in such buildings.

Approximately how many workers in Wisconsin identify themselves as thermal system insulators? There are approximately 600 workers/mechanics who have completed apprenticeship training and are classified as professional thermal system insulators.

What is the benefit of licensing and regulating these thermal system insulators? Wisconsin consumers will then have a way of knowing who is *qualified* to install these important protective/safety items in buildings in the state. More importantly, **Wisconsin consumers would be protected from the consequences resulting from the improper installation of these products; namely: mold, fires, structural damage, and health problems.** An additional benefit is that a minimum training standard will be developed and put in place. This training standard will ensure that the tradesman that install thermal system insulation materials will have the formal training necessary to do the job properly.

Who would administer the licensing and regulation of these professionally trained thermal system insulators? Since the Wisconsin Dept. of Commerce has a Safety and Buildings Division that oversees the licensing and regulation of other trades such as plumbing, pipefitting, electricians, fire sprinklers, and elevators, it is logical to house the licensing and regulation in the Dept. of Commerce.

What professional experience would be required under this proposed legislation for a person to be licensed as a professional thermal system insulator? A person could obtain a thermal system insulator's license if he or she had at least 4 years of work experience and had passed a written examination approved by Commerce; or had successfully completed an approved apprenticeship program in thermal system insulation.

Would thermal system insulation contractors also be licensed? No, just the trained mechanics who install thermal system insulation would be licensed.

Would owners of private residences in Wisconsin have to hire licensed thermal system insulators to perform thermal system insulation installation services in their private residences? No. The proposed legislation specifically states that the licensing requirements *would not* apply to any residential building, structure, or facility that contains fewer than 4 residential units. Similarly, the legislation would *not* mandate any *new requirements* for residential buildings of more than 4 units. Private citizens would *not* have to use licensed thermal system insulators in their single-family home or duplex.

Would this licensing requirement lead to increased costs for the State and the Department of Commerce? While the legislation calls for Commerce to employ a person who has experience in the installation of thermal system insulation as a state inspector, the costs for employing this person would be fully paid by the fees imposed on those seeking to be licensed as thermal system insulators. Therefore, the new licensing requirement would be self-funded.

Would the licensing requirement impede the entry of anyone who wants to be a thermal system insulator from the profession? There would be *no* restrictions on the number of people who want to be thermal system insulators. As long as the interested party completed the training and/or apprenticeship program called for in the legislation, they could be licensed as a heat and frost insulator in the state. In addition, even unlicensed workers would be allowed to continue to work as installers of thermal system insulation as long as they are working under the direct supervision of someone who *is* a licensed mechanic. This legislation is meant to protect the residents and the businesses of the state from faulty installation of thermal system insulation products. It would *not* restrict people from becoming qualified heat and frost insulators.