

November 10, 2018

Ms Jennifer Jones  
Acting Director  
Texas State Sunset Commission  
P.O. Box 13066  
Austin, TX 78711

Re: Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners  
Sunset Review

Dear Ms Jones:

I am not a plumber, but a retired City Manager who had the opportunity to serve on the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners from 2001 to 2008. I served as Chairman of that Board for six years, and became very familiar with the training and skills it takes to become a plumber in the State of Texas.

I am aware that it is time for the Texas State Board of Plumbers Examiners (TSBPE) to be reviewed by the Texas Sunset Commission. Ms Davis, I think that you and I have worked together before, and I am pleased that you are the Policy Analyst who has been assigned to work with this Board.

With the Texas economy booming, there is a demand for knowledgeable and skilled plumbers. The testing facilities at the TSBPE are at capacity, and the staff comes in on Saturdays to help accommodate the large numbers applying for the tests. Even with the large numbers of applicants the Board and staff are vigilant ensuring each student understands and passes both the written tests and practical before being issued a Plumber License. This is time consuming on the staff, but they take pride in the quality of plumbers they produce. There never seems to be enough people to staff the training center and still provide the desired number of inspectors in the field. Additional personnel are the greatest need of the TSBPE today.

I am sure you will hear the question raised of why should the TSBPE be a "stand alone" agency and why it cannot be incorporated into the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations. The requirements to become a plumber in the State of Texas are quite different from agencies regulated by the TDLR. Plumbers are required to not only pass a series of tests, but must pass a "skill practical" to demonstrate their plumbing knowledge before being issued a license. This practical is the most critical part of the testing process because aspiring plumbers must be able to physically demonstrate proficiency. Students can study textbooks to learn methods, but just reading about a skill does not make someone able to perform critical tasks. The required practical is the reason for the TSBPE's large building. The back of the structure contains a number of lab stations where students must demonstrate industrial skills by reading a

building's plumbing blueprint, determining the type of and amount of supplies needed, and install a completed and accurate plumbing system in the structure.

The skills required of a plumber are totally different from that of an electrician, which is licensed by the TDLR. If an electrician makes a mistake it will either kill him or burn down the structure. If a plumber makes a mistake, it can contaminate the drinking water of an entire city. That is why the TSBPE is so rigid in assuring a person earning a Plumber's License is knowledgeable in the trade. Also, they must take Continuing Education classes in order to maintain their license.

The Texas State Board of Plumber Examiners is a critically important agency within the State's structure because of the roll it has in protecting the public health and safety. When you use the services of a plumber in the State of Texas, you can have confidence that person is trained and has the knowledge to properly and safely do his assigned task.

I would ask that you give favorable consideration in recommending the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners be allowed to continue their important work for the citizens of Texas.

If you have any questions would be pleased to assist you or if I can arrange a tour of the facilities for you, I would be happy to do that.

Sincerely,



John Hatchel  
Former Board Chairman