

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Janet Wood](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Friday, June 20, 2014 12:59:34 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2014 12:54 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Friday, June 20, 2014 - 12:54

Agency: DEPARTMENT STATE HEALTH SERVICES DSHS

First Name: Esther

Last Name: Pollock

Title: Code Enforcement officer

Organization you are affiliated with: City of Somerville, GCC, LLC

City: Caldwell (residence), Somerville (employer)

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

I am a code enforcement officer and have been one for about 8 years. I am also a licensed engineer. I can honestly say that in a lot of ways code enforcement is harder. The required familiarity with laws about property rights, the constant change in the legislative requirements for administering code enforcement activities, especially those related to dangerous buildings abatement, and the need to understand how to maintain fairness and equality, avoiding trespass on civil and constitutional rights, while still protecting the community from the health and physical hazards created by violations of the statutes and ordinances we deal with is a constant balancing act. We are law enforcement officers, but not peace officers; we are often treated as the least important force in a city and yet, there is no other work force that has the legal standing and TRAINING to deal so directly with the nuisances and dangerous buildings that contribute to blight and urban decay.

If this profession is just a job with no training requirements, completely open to interpretation, you will have dozens of Stewart cases to live with, or none because there will be no protection of any kind for those officers trying to administer the statutes, and that is not a risk I am willing to take.

I would personally not have a serious issue with another agency administering the licensing procedure. The organization at the DSHS has seemed to me to be pretty lackluster and non-responsive over all. And the code enforcement officer advisory board is unnecessary.

But to say that code enforcement does not affect public health?

What about a swimming pool covered in scum and trash, about 6 feet deep in a back yard of a home where a child lives?

What about an abandoned house with no doors or windows with a bathtub in the bathroom, fallen through the floor, half full of enough water to drown children or small animals? Heard of West Nile?

What about a rental property with enough holes in the wall to provide a breeze, with no plumbing, and the residue of crack cocaine in one room?

What about hotels or rooming houses that are a threat to human life every time they are entered by a member of the public, say for example facilities with no working smoke detectors, with broken windows, stained carpets, water damaged walls and ceilings, or door locks that don't function. If you do away with our professional description, what happens to our power to obtain warrants, inspect properties, and hold hearings to enforce abatement of conditions like these?

We are or can be a fall back for those overworked food inspectors employed by the state when we receive a complaint for example, that an establishment is being operated in a manner that is not sanitary due to rodent infestation (the state inspector said he might get there in the next 6 months).

The work we do directly affects the health, safety and public welfare in the communities we work in, in ways that are not replicated elsewhere. You do all of us, and the public, a grave disservice by assuming that because we do not get in trouble all the time, we are not valuable.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

If the agency has extra funds, cut the cost of the registration.

Transfer us to a new agency if you must.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree