



CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JAY ASH
SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Professional Licensure
1000 Washington Street • Boston • Massachusetts • 02118

JOHN C. CHAPMAN
UNDERSECRETARY OF
CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND
BUSINESS REGULATION

CHARLES BORSTEL
DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

Testimony of Jay Ash
Secretary, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

In Support of H. 68, *An Act to Reorganize the Department of Public Safety*
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Chairman Timilty and Chairman Kocot, and Honorable Members of the Joint Committee:

Good Morning. My name is Jay Ash and I am Secretary of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. Here with me are Undersecretary John Chapman of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation, and Director Charles Borstel of the Division of Professional Licensure.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify here today about this important legislation, which establishes an Office of Public Safety and Inspections within the Division of Professional Licensure. This legislation is an important and positive change for consumers, the construction and building industry, licensees, and the numerous boards of the Department of Public Safety and the Division of Professional Licensure.

DPL is one of five agencies housed in HED's Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation. Many of you are personally familiar with DPL, but I'd like to give you an even better sense of the full extent of what DPL does.

As Secretary Bennett explained, DPS has evolved into a licensing and inspectional services organization, which is exactly why it is such a good fit within DPL. DPL is responsible for licensing 387,000 individuals, businesses, and schools to engage in more than 50 trades and professions in Massachusetts.

This is accomplished through the work of 100 employees, who support 28 boards of registration and the Office of Private Occupational School Education. Again, building on Secretary Bennett's comment that any agency should be concerned with the safety of its constituency, DPL's core mission is to protect public safety, health, and welfare through licensing and enforcement. DPL licenses both individuals and businesses to assure the public that licensees meet expected levels of professional standards. DPL also fairly and consistently enforces the licensing laws and regulations of the trades and professions it oversees through its Offices of Investigations, Prosecutions and Hearings, and has the power to issue fines, or suspend and revoke licenses when its standards are not met. DPL seeks to protect consumers, promote a fair and competitive marketplace, and provide education and outreach to the community.

This legislation is a good government bill and will benefit the people and businesses of the Commonwealth for several reasons:



First: DPL has the organizational structure, management, and expertise to effectively and efficiently fulfill its core mission of public safety and to promote a fair and competitive marketplace.

Second: DPL has a full service and dedicated enforcement unit that consists of the Office of Investigations, Office of Prosecutions and Office of Hearings. Those three offices investigate consumer complaints, prosecute individuals and businesses, and adjudicate disciplinary cases on behalf of the boards.

Third: Consolidation will reduce the burden on construction and trades because the licensing and oversight of most of these trade professions will fall under the jurisdiction of one agency. In most states, (New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont to name a few) the trade boards and code-writing bodies are organized within one agency. As it stands now, individuals who hold licenses in multiple trades must go to both DPS and DPL to transact business in the Commonwealth.

For example, in order to work as a Systems contractor (such as fire and security), the licensee, prior to being able to install any of these systems, is required to obtain a license from the Electrical Board at DPL and then submit an S License application to DPS for approval.

Another example pertains to the plumbing industry. A plumber who works in a hospital or in a medical office needs a plumbing license with DPL in order to perform any work on their water systems-toilets and sinks. However, if the plumber performs work in facilities where the labor involves pipes with oxygen or other medical gases, that plumber would need to obtain a process pipe license from DPS.

Fourth: Consolidation will streamline and reduce the need for multiple inspections by multiple agencies and allow for better coordination of inspections of state-owned buildings. Currently, on all state-owned building construction, a permit for the building must be obtained from DPS, while any sheet metal or plumbing work requires a permit to be obtained from DPL. Each agency is responsible for inspecting these buildings for compliance with their corresponding code. This process is not only unnecessarily duplicative and burdensome, but can potentially slow down construction and drive up costs. Under just DPL, coordination would be convenient, improved and less costly.

Fifth: Multiple cross-jurisdictional and scope of practice issues can be resolved more efficiently if both agencies are consolidated into DPL. This will lead to clearer standards and better services to licensees and the building and construction industry.

Lastly: Combining two agencies doing the same types of licensing and inspections activities into one agency will save taxpayers and the state budget approximately \$800,000 annually. That savings is accomplished by eliminating 11 redundant positions.

In closing, this legislation makes good fiscal and organizational sense to consolidate the regulatory, licensing, and enforcement functions of DPS and DPL into one agency. Most importantly, it will benefit the people of the Commonwealth. It will eliminate redundancy in government services and provide developers, businesses, licensees, and consumers with the convenience of efficiently transacting all licensing and regulatory services by doing so within DPL.

Thank you.