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Union plumbers and contractors urge Beacon Hill lawmakers to protect state plumbing code and build partnerships on green energy transition

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Plumbers Local 12, the Greater Boston Plumbing Contractors Association, and several other industry leaders spoke with lawmakers about issues impacting the plumbing industry.

Boston, MA Union plumbers, contractors and industry leaders rallied at the State House to advocate for protecting the state's plumbing codes, build partnerships on green energy transition and petition legislators on other key safety and regulatory issues impacting the industry. More than 200 union plumbers, contractors and other industry professionals spent the day at the State House meeting with lawmakers and delivering information about the importance of maintaining Massachusetts' plumbing code. The state code, which is revised regularly to adapt to new technologies, has been protecting the health and safety of citizens and ensuring high-quality plumbing work for decades.

There have been efforts in other states to replace state codes with a national version that would weaken regulations.

“It’s imperative to protect the existing Massachusetts plumbing code and not allow outside interests to implement a watered-down version that would lower health and safety standards,” said Local 12 business manager Tim Fandel. “The current code is revised regularly by local industry professionals who are intimately familiar with the unique issues here in Massachusetts. Removing that local oversight in favor of lax national standards would be a mistake that would put the public and our profession at risk.”

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Local 12, the Greater Boston Plumbing Contractors Association, and several other industry leaders met with Rep. Tacky Chan, chair of the Legislature’s Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure. In addition to advocating for a robust local plumbing code, the groups spoke with lawmakers about other issues impacting the industry, including ensuring the plumbing industry is included in green building and energy policy conversations, especially decarbonizing the building sector and the development and use of green hydrogen technology.

They also discussed increasing funding for the Division of Occupational Licensure, as well as pending legislation on greywater recycling and a bill to require that drain cleaning is only conducted by licensed plumbers.

The plumbing industry, including manufacturing, wholesale and retail, has a combined direct economic impact in Massachusetts exceeding \$759 million and supports over 4,600 jobs. The industry generates more than \$335 million in annual tax revenue for the Commonwealth, while the service and construction side of the industry includes more than 11,000 journeyworker licensees, 6,000 master licensees, 5,000 apprentices, 450 inspectors, and 1200 corporations, as well as hundreds of independent businesses.

“Our union plumbers and contractors are the leaders and experts in green building and energy. It is crucial that we are consulted in the conversations around changes that would impact our industry, as well as the health and safety of the public,” said Andrew DeAngelo, executive director of the Greater Boston Plumbing Contractors Association, which represents every union plumbing contractor in eastern Massachusetts. “By supporting licensed plumbers and the existing homegrown code, our elected leaders are supporting public safety and protecting the health of our communities.”

