

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1303

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 17, 2019

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1303 (1R).

Senate Bill No. 1303(1R) amends and supplements “The State Plumbing License Law of 1968” to provide for the licensure of master hearth professionals. To be eligible for licensure as a master hearth professional, an applicant must be at least 21 years of age, be a United States citizen or a legal resident, possess a valid master hearth professional certification from a nationally recognized body, and have at least five years of experience in hearth professional work. The bill also adds two members to the State Board of Examiners of Master Plumbers who are master hearth professionals with at least 10 years of experience in hearth professional work.

“Hearth professional work” is defined in the bill as the installation, replacement, connection, venting, inspection, repair, maintenance, or servicing of hearth product appliances, barbecue appliances, outdoor patio appliances, and space heater appliances, and shall include the installation, inspection, repair, or servicing of vents, vent connectors, masonry, metal and factory built chimney and vent systems, natural or manufactured gas piping on the load side of the meter, as well as making any electrical connection necessary for the proper functioning of the aforementioned appliances. Hearth professional work must comply with all applicable requirements of building codes, gas codes, and any other industry standards deemed appropriate by the State board.

The bill provides that no person is permitted to work as a master hearth professional or use the title or designation of “licensed master hearth professional” or “master hearth professional” unless licensed pursuant to the provisions of the bill. Furthermore, no provision of the bill is to be construed to prevent any person licensed by the State, including, but not limited to, architects, professional engineers, electrical contractors, master plumbers, or any chimney service professional registered as a home improvement contractor with the Division of Consumer Affairs, from acting within the scope of practice of the respective profession or occupation, but no person may use the designation “licensed master

hearth professional” unless licensed as a master hearth professional under the provisions of the bill.

The provisions of the bill do not prohibit a municipality from inspecting hearth professional work or the equipment of a master hearth professional, or from enforcing the standards and manner in which hearth professional work may be done. However, no municipality, local board of health or other agency is permitted to require a master hearth professional licensed under the bill to obtain any additional license, apply for or take any examination, or pay any licensing fee.

The bill requires each master hearth professional, as a condition of license renewal, to complete any continuing education requirements imposed by the State board. The State board must establish standards for continuing master hearth professional education, including the subject matter and content of courses of study, the selection of instructors, and the number and type of continuing education credits required of a master hearth professional as a condition of license renewal.

The provisions of the bill do not apply to a single family home owner who performs hearth professional work on the person’s own dwelling.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) determined that impact of the bill to be indeterminate; however, OLS estimates that the license and renewal fees paid by licensees may defray licensure, regulation, and enforcement costs. The bill increases the membership of the State Board of Examiners of Master Plumbers from seven to nine members, to include two master hearth professionals. Under current law, each member of the State board receives \$25 for each meeting day in attendance and in addition is entitled to be reimbursed for necessary traveling expenses provided compensation in any fiscal year does not exceed \$1,000 per member. Pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1968, c.362 (C.45:14C-1 et seq.), the board currently establishes fees for license and renewal applications.