

**Testimony of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
February 7th, 2013**

Representative Dargan, Senator Hartley, and members of the Public Safety Committee, my name is Paul Costello and I am here today to speak on behalf of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in opposition to Proposed Bill 5749 An Act Concerning Revisions to the State Building Code.

As the chairs and some members of this committee may recall, we were before you two years ago to discuss this very issue, however at that time we requested that the adoption process for the various building codes be more timely and clearly defined. We, along with other tradespeople, have been frustrated over the years with the delay in revising CT's building codes to keep up with national standards, and therefore would not be able to support this bill as written as it would allow for the Codes and Standards committee to take up to six years to revise a code to incorporate revisions made on the national level. However, we appreciate the chance to discuss this issue with the committee.

The example I am most familiar with is that of the National Electrical Code, which in CT has not been updated since the 2005 edition. On the national level it has been revised twice since then with the third revision coming up just after this legislation session adjourns. Connecticut is one of only two states in the country that is still on the 2005 edition. We feel there are safety concerns with using outdated codes. There have been numerous changes to code requirements for new technology especially in the renewable energy sector. Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ's) are faced with the challenges of inspecting photovoltaic installations, wind turbines, and electric vehicle charging stations that are constantly improving in technology but are not addressed in our current code.

I know there will be proponents of this Bill which may feel these changes in codes may add additional cost to construction including residential dwellings. We must not lose sight of the purpose of the electrical code which is to safeguard person and property. These codes are not limited to the residential sector. We must strive to make our schools, hospitals, places of business, and all electrical installations safe for not only the occupants, but also those of us that install and maintain these systems.

As an instructor it is difficult to teach apprenticeship courses using text that reference code books that are far ahead of our state's inspection standards. There have been over 8,700 proposals with more than 5,200 comments for revisions to the NEC just between the 2005 and the 2011 edition. Many of these have been adopted and now are creating confusion for electrical contractors and engineers that work and design across state borders.

Another of your colleagues, Representative Tim Ackert, has proposed a bill, House Bill 6301, which would require that the Building Inspector update the National Electrical Code to be consistent with the most recent national revision, which as of January 2014 would be the 2014 edition, and would also require that any future updates be made no later than one year following

the release of a new edition on the national level. We would support this bill and ask that the committee consider it.

We would like to acknowledge the Codes and Standards division of the Department of Construction Services for their recent proposal to update the Electrical Code to incorporate 2011 revisions. While this has not been adopted yet, it is a promising step in the right direction, and we have heard there are plans to adopt the 2014 version in a timely manner. We certainly would like to see this progress continue and would welcome the chance to discuss the issue in more detail with both committee members and the Department to come to mutually agreeable solution which would prevent delays such as those we have seen in past years.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.