PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY – MARCH 5, 2014

RE: **H.B. 5461 – AAC Revisions to Statutes Relating to the CT Airport Authority**

SUBMITTED TO: TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

SUBMITTED BY: Joyce A. Wojtas, Lobbyist – Mechanical Contractors Assoc. of CT

The Mechanical Contractors Association of CT would like to go on record in **opposition to H.B. 5461 – Sec. 4, Line 189 – changes to C.G.S. Sec. 20-340** (Exemptions from Occupational Licensing Requirements) that adds a new subsection **(19) exempting employees of the CT Airport Authority from the occupational licensing requirements of Chapter 393.** This new exemption would open the door for other (9 or 10) quasi-public agencies to seek an exemption for an unknown number of people performing this work.

The **occupational licensing statutes were not enacted into law to hurt or hinder anyone's operations or functions.** Their main purpose is to ascertain that the people performing plumbing and piping work, heating, piping and cooling work, electrical work, sprinkler fitter work, sheet metal work, elevator work, etc. have the appropriate training as apprentices and after four or five years of training, are allowed to take an examination for their license. **These laws were enacted to protect the safety of the public.**

The current exemption from occupational licensing requirements for "persons employed by any federal, state or municipal agency" **has been on the books for FORTY-NINE YEARS** (1965). At that time, I am certain that this exemption was the most expedient way to get a major licensing law adopted in the state. There have been bills proposed over the past ten year to eliminate that exemption, because both committees of cognizance (Labor and General Law) realize that in forty-nine years many changes in technology have taken place and all installations by the licensed trades have become more complicated and sophisticated making licensing much more important today than it was back in the "good old days". In addition to the four or five years of apprenticeship training, today's licensees are also required to take continuing education courses, some annually and some bi-annually, in order to renew their licenses and keep up to date with changes in the codes.

Any persons affected by the change to the quasi-public agency that has the experience in the occupation should check with the appropriate occupational licensing board to see if they are eligible to take the examination based on their years of experience working in the trade. All new hires should be required to have the appropriate licenses.

Remember, it was only a few years ago when it was finally determined that the state would have to comply with the "*State Building Code*" which incorporates, by reference, the "*National Plumbing, Electrical, Mechanical, etc. Codes*". **It is time to get into the 21st century, not a time to risk peoples lives because of faulty installations and maintenance.** This is especially true at a place, such as an airport, that has such an overwhelming amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on a daily basis. **Let's think about the safety of the public first, rather than the convenience of the agency and delete Line 189 of the bill.**

Thank you for your consideration.

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