



January 24, 2024

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chairman
House Corporations Committee

RE: H 7015 — “An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions—Electricians

Dear Chairman Solomon and Committee Members:

On behalf of the more than 6,000 Rhode Island REALTORS®, thank you for allowing our association the opportunity to express our concerns regarding H 7015— “An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions—Electricians.” We appreciate your leadership in the House and your commitment to advocating for commonsense business regulations.

The Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® (RIAR) opposes H 7015 as drafted, which would make it unlawful for home inspectors to assess electrical systems and components during a residential real estate transaction. Failure to obtain an accurate home inspection could cost homebuyers significant money and aggravation in the long run, while jeopardizing safety.

Home inspections are vital to making the home buying and selling process an experience that will positively impact the largest financial transaction of one’s lifetime. But it has come to the attention of RIAR that the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Board of Examiners for Electricians has challenged the responsibility of home inspectors to perform visual inspections of residential electrical systems. For instance, home inspectors open electrical panels so that they can visually inspect the panel for defects such as burned wiring, double-tapped wiring connections, improper bonding, etc. When such findings are documented, the home inspector has an obligation to report these unsafe conditions to prospective homebuyers.

Moreover, a REALTOR® is bound to acknowledge any unsafe conditions and communicate these findings with potential buyers and sellers in accordance with the National Association of REALTORS® Code of Ethics. It is our hope that homeowners or prospective buyers will contact a licensed electrician to remedy any deficiencies documented in a home inspector’s report.

Certification and License Requirements—Home Inspectors

For decades, home buyers and sellers have relied on timely inspections and the professionalism of inspectors to make the real estate transaction process a seamless one. Thanks to the advocacy efforts of RIAR, home inspectors and others who wish to conduct home inspections

on behalf of a client for a fee in Rhode Island must now be licensed by Rhode Island's Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board.¹

Here are some of the requirements that the Rhode Island Home Inspectors License requires (440-RICR-10-00-5):

- **Education Requirements**
 - The twelve (12) credit hours shall be related to the practice of home inspection or topics related to the licensee's business, including but not limited to, report writing, building codes, business procedures, inspection of particular systems and components (i.e. plumbing, mechanical, roofing, exteriors, electrical, etc.).
- **System: Electrical**
 1. The inspector shall observe and report on;
 - a. The exterior service entrance conductors,
 - b. The service equipment, including the main overcurrent device,
 - c. The grounding system device,
 - d. The service and distribution panels by removing the enclosure cover,
 - e. The branch circuit, overcurrent devices, and conductor capability; and
 - f. A representative number of interior and exterior receptacles.
 2. The inspector shall identify:
 - a. The service as being overhead or underground,
 - b. The type of interior wiring,
 - c. The ampacity of the main service-disconnect,
 - d. The location of the service and distribution panels, and
 - e. The presence of aluminum wiring in branch circuits.
 3. The inspector shall test:
 - a. The polarity and grounding of a representative number of receptacles; and
 - b. The operation of a comprehensible sample of all readily accessible ground fault circuit interrupters.

In addition to the state licensure designation, home inspectors are certified by the National Association of Certified Home Inspectors. According to the National Association of Certified Home Inspectors, home inspectors are required to inspect “panelboards and overcurrent protection devices (circuit breakers and fuses).”²

Should the General Assembly make real estate transactions more expensive during this time of soaring inflation and record high home prices?

RIAR has been notified that the Board of Examiners for Electricians is requiring all real estate licensees to hire licensed electricians to conduct home electrical inspections. RIAR is concerned that the expenses associated with having multiple parties inspect homes during the real estate transaction is costly and are ultimately passed on to the consumer. It has also come to our attention that some municipalities are unilaterally threatening homeowners,

¹ <http://www.crb.ri.gov/home-inspector/>

² [Home Inspection Standards of Practice - InterNACHI®](#)

REALTORS®, and/or home inspectors with fines if a licensed electrician is not hired during the real estate transaction. Thankfully, the Rhode Island Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board voted unanimously last year in opposition to H 7015 as drafted, as they are the regulatory body responsible for licensing home inspectors.

RIAR and our members take seriously the health and safety of homebuyers, sellers, and homeowners. However, passage of H 7015 would negate the licensure requirements of home inspectors and burden homebuyers with additional costs. As always, RIAR is ready and willing to work with all parties involved, so that real estate transactions are not disrupted while keeping buyers, sellers, and homeowners safe.

RIAR urges this committee and the House of Representatives to take no action on H 7015.

Sincerely,



Philip Tedesco, RCE, CAE, CIPS
Chief Executive Officer
Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®