

Testimony Submitted by

Catherine Flaherty, Executive Director

Air Conditioning Association of New England (ACA/NE)

Tuesday, October 17, 2017

Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure

**H2815 - An Act relative to refrigeration technicians**

Senator L'Italien, Representative Chan, members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony in opposition to H.2815, An Act relative to refrigeration technicians.

My name is Catherine Flaherty. I am the executive director of the Air Conditioning Association of New England (ACA/NE).

ACA/NE is a non-profit trade association for heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigeration contractors. ACA/NE represents and serves companies that design, install, service and repair air conditioning, heating, refrigeration, air purification, ventilating systems, plumbing, piping, sheet metal and energy management systems of all sizes and complexities. In addition, membership includes manufacturers of equipment, wholesalers and distributors of equipment, vocational and technical schools, and others with an interest in the HVAC/R industry.

H.2815 will require HVAC contractors to obtain a refrigeration license.

ACA/NE is opposed to the passage H.2815. Our members are concerned that if this bill passes, HVAC contractors will no longer be able to do what they presently do every day and have done for many years without a license. Most residential and small commercial systems are limited to 5 tons or less and an exemption exists for work under 10 tons.

HVAC technicians may already acquire numerous licenses including those for Plumbers and Gas Fitters, Oil Burner, Unrestricted Refrigeration, Electricians, and Pipe Fitters. Plus HVAC technicians are required to have a sheet metal license if they do duct work.

If HVAC technicians are required to obtain a refrigeration license they will also have to pay for all the renewals and the continuing education for the new license, which is considerable. For example, a technician who wants to obtain a sheet metal license must complete 8,000 hours of sheet metal experience, over no less than five years and complete 750 hours of Board-approved education. This industry like many other trades is suffering from a shortage of workers. This legislation would add to the labor crisis.

If H.2815 passes, it could take 8-10 years for a worker to be completely licensed to install a residential system including a minimum of 3 years for a restricted license in sheet metal and a five-year apprenticeship in refrigeration. The time can't be concurrent.

ACA/NE members believe that this legislation would further restrict the industry with this licensing requirement. This requirement seems overly burdensome and outside the intent of Governor Baker's Executive Order # 562 to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens.

ACA/NE respectfully asks that the Committee reject this legislative proposal.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present the residential HVAC industry's position on H.2815.

### **ACA/NE Contacts**

Manny Chaves  
[manny@chaveshvac.com](mailto:manny@chaveshvac.com)  
ACA/NE Government Affairs Chairman  
Chaves Heating and AC, Inc.  
15 Bonazzoli Ave.  
Hudson, MA 01749  
Phone: (978) 562-5309  
Fax: (978) 562-1026

Catherine Flaherty, CAE  
[cflaherty@acane.org](mailto:cflaherty@acane.org)  
ACA|NE Executive Director  
11 Robert Toner Blvd., # 234  
North Attleboro, MA 02763  
Phone: 508-839-3407  
Fax: 508-232-6005