

Hello, my name is Patty Dooley-Strappelli, and I am an Air Quality Specialist with the Radon Program at Boulder County Public Health.

I am testifying on behalf of CALPHO, the Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials, in support of HB21-1195.

In conducting our radon work, we promote radon awareness and mitigation across the state of Colorado, working with local governments, health agencies, real estate professionals, homebuilders, and radon mitigation professionals.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. The U.S. EPA estimates that about 21,000 lung cancer deaths occurring in our country each year are attributed to radon exposure, including approximately 500 deaths in Colorado. Overall, unhealthy radon levels occur in 50% of homes in Colorado, with some counties experiencing even higher percentages. Anyone in Colorado can claim to be a radon tester or mitigator, but standards must be followed in order to conduct this work properly. That is because improperly installed radon mitigation systems can unknowingly increase radon levels and increase the risk of exposure and cause harm to inhabitants.

One example is a problem that we see regularly with real estate transactions. Due to the prevalence of radon in Colorado, radon testing is often brought and accessed during these important transactions. Current weak disclosure laws allow many people to purchase their homes with unknown information. When testing is done in conjunction with real estate transactions, it is often done quickly, resulting in inaccurate test results. For example, the necessary “closed house” conditions are not always maintained, or testing equipment is not properly calibrated. Contractor licensing would ensure that radon testing and mitigation is being done properly.

One of our local radon professionals, Gregory Bickle, shared the following story. Mr. Bickle owns a Longmont-based radon and mold mitigation business called American Scientific and Environmental Consulting. He estimates that 15-20% of his jobs involve fixing

mitigation systems that were improperly installed. Mr. Bickle told us, “You can honestly get into this business, go to school, and get your tools for under \$5,000. It’s not hard to get into this. There’s nobody out there policing it.” He also said, “. . .I compete against a lot of these people who aren’t doing what they’re supposed to.”

It is important to recognize that improper testing can lead to incorrect radon measurement numbers, and improper mitigation can fail to decrease radon levels or even increase levels by drawing radon back into the home at concentrated levels. The danger is that homeowners can have a false sense of security because they have a new mitigation system; yet they may actually be living in higher levels of radiation exposure. Requiring radon contractor licensing through certification would eliminate many of these dangerous issues. Therefore, we strongly urge you to support your support HB21-1195.

Thank you.