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2022 Field Verification and Diagnostic Testing OIR Comments

Hello,

My name is Mike Little. I am a HERS Rater, or an "FV&DT Technician". I was certified in 2020. I am an owner/operator with no employees. I have invested \$20,000+ and countless training hours. I am already at a considerable disadvantage when it comes to competing with large companies in my area, but I think some of the rule changes would force me out of business.

I would like to address several of the main topics of the proposed changes to the HERS program, and one or two that are not.

Move all FV&DT from Title 20 to Title 24: I have no issues or comments for this

Change the title of "rater" to "FV&DT Technician": I definitely think a name change is in order. FV&DT Technician is a mouthful, but it is better than HERS Rater, which sounds misogynistic and goofy.

Raters can only be hired by the property owner: This seems restrictive and will be easy to work around. If the contractor recommends someone, 99% of the time that will be the chosen sub-contractor. If you do not allow contractors to recommend the FV&DT Technicians, then I would have to spend a great deal of money on advertising. How would I even do it? I have spoken with internet advertisers and asked if they could search Building and Safety new mechanical permits to target these home owners. They have informed me that the "crawl" software does not exist. They were not even sure it was possible, and if it was, it would be costly for me. My advertising budget at this time is \$0 because I have painstakingly established working relationships with general contractors and C20 contractors. Through these relationships I am creating compliance of the contractors because I continuously educate them on best practices and general awareness of what is required of them. A home owner will hire a FV&DT Technician 1-3 times in their lifetime, it would be impossible for me to target that tiny demographic.

Another issue with home owner pay is re-testing. If the system fails, why would the home owner have to pay for the re-test? They should not be responsible for this, and would have to try to recover the charges from the contractor. This is a flawed system.

Require annual "in-lab" audits of all raters. This is a good idea. you can use an organization like The Wollin Group that is very knowledgeable and already does this kind of training on a mobile platform. I would hope that the cost could be at least partially subsidized by the CEC or the utilities or a combination of both.

Rating companies will be able to provide secondary services, like pulling permits and signing as document authors, but independent raters will not: This, again, is giving the

larger companies a distinct advantage. I offer all these services, and because I do this, I am directly responsible for an increase in permitted projects in my area. Contractors will not do this, and do not want yet another party involved.

Remove the Designation of Raters as Special Inspectors: This is not a concern to me.

I have very limited statistical data on companies falsifying data, so I do not believe I am qualified to speak on that issue. I believe the most important issue is non-permitted change-outs, but my data is anecdotal at best. I would guess that 90% of change-outs are not permitted. How can you possibly meet your goal of six million heat pumps installed by 2030 if only 60% or 70% or 90% are installed without permits? How can you achieve energy compliance if only 10% of installs are tested?

In conclusion: Penalizing companies that are falsifying data is important, but according to the statistics presented at the workshop on November 15 only 5% of change-outs are permitted. The emphasis seems to be concentrated on the falsification of some of the testing out of that 5% which is a very small number. This does not seem logical to me. Why not focus on the 95% of installed systems that are not being tested? The first goal should be incentivize permit pulling to contractors and/or home owners. A \$300 tax credit for replacing an HVAC system would cover the cost of the permit and part of the testing. Create a pilot program in a small to medium market and compare your year to year data. I also think setting more realistic goals for systems using existing equipment will encourage more C20 installers to participate. Please do not cripple my ability to compete. I have a five year business plan, and if I cannot meet my financial goals I will have to leave the industry.

Sincerely,

M. Little

Michael Little HERS Rating (FV&DT Technician)

805.813.1204

mlittlehersrater@yahoo.com