

**2024 ohba year IN revieW**

***OHBA ACCOMPLISHED HUGE FEAT IN ENSURING REMODELING COVERED UNDER HOME CONSTRUCTION SERVICE SUPPLIER ACT***

After multiple appeals court opinions ruling ‘remodeling’ was not construction, thus covered by the Consumer Sales Practices Act and subject to strict liability and treble damages, OHBA went to the legislature to clarify the law, as intended. In a huge feat before the legislature broke for summer recess, OHBA was successful with an amendment to include remodeling in the definition of ‘home construction service’ to be covered by the Home Construction Services Suppliers Act.

***OHBA STREAMLINED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION PROCESS***

After successfully getting changes in the law enacted to exempt the increase in value of residential development property until the lot is sold or construction begins, OHBA was again victorious in streamlining the application process. Changes in the approving authority and appeals process shortened the implementation timing significantly.

***OHBA TESTIFIED ON LACK OF SUPPLY IN SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOUSING***

OHBA President, Enzo Perfetto, and Executive Officer, Vince Squillace testified on behalf of OHBA bringing both experience as a builder and industry expert to reiterate the impact of regulation and the importance of private development in the critical lack of housing supply.

OHBA provided a list of recommendations, including but not limited to line extension costs, building code review, land development standards, referenda and zoning reform, among others.

***TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY OF ARC FAULT PROVISIONS CHALLENGED***

With the most recent adoption of the 2023 NEC and expansion in prior versions of the NEC, OHBA urged members having any issues with Arc fault and Dual function breakers across multi-family and single-family business to send along to the Residential Construction Advisory Committee (RCAC) and OHBA for consideration. One of the statutory requirements for the review of any code change is ‘technical feasibility’ giving OHBA an avenue to challenge based in the revised code.

***MISTAKE IN ADOPTION OF NEC 2023 OHIO EXCEPTION CORRECTED***

The 2023 NEC was set to become effective March 1, 2024. After learning an exception to GFCI requirements intended by the RCAC/BBS to be included in the new code was mistakenly left out of the final rule, OHBA ensured it was to be corrected immediately.

The GFCI exception for sump pumps maintained from the current code remains in the 2023 NEC after the Board of Building Standards refiled the corrected rule with the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR). The need to refile resulted in the effective date being pushed back by at least 30 days while the corrected rule went through the JCARR review before final filing.

***OHBA SUPPORTED VARIOUS APPROACHES TO ADDRESS HOUSING SHORTAGE***

OHBA continued to urge legislators, regulators, and industry partners to look at the impact of regulation and land development costs. Developed lots are a crucial piece to the housing puzzle; this remained the consistent message from OHBA in these ongoing discussions. OHBA urged lawmakers and industry partners to focus on what can be done to deal with the shortage of available, reasonably priced lots where additional homes can be built. Infrastructure needs, development standards, utility capacity, referenda, and a meaningful comprehensive plan were a few discussion points.

***MONITORED IMPLEMENTAION OF ELEVATOR CONTRACTOR/MECHANIC LICENSING RULES***

After passage of legislation, those who install or maintain elevators had one year to obtain an elevator contractor's or elevator mechanic's license. Contractors and mechanics will have until Nov. 1, 2025, to be licensed. Previously, only elevator inspectors were required to be licensed.

OHBA was successful in exempting licensure for those performing work in a private residence and on platform lifts and stairway chairlifts within the scope of the safety standard adopted by the American society of mechanical engineers commonly referred to as ASME A18.1.

There were grandfathering provisions included in the legislation for those contractors/mechanics already practicing in the field and able to show meet the experience requirements.

***OHIO DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT LOOKED TO OHBA FOR FUNDING IDEAS***

Ohio Department of Development Director and staff reached out to OHBA for insight as the department considered how funding could help bring more housing opportunities around the state.

***OHBA JOINED IN EFFORTS TO ADDRESS ISSUES WITH BUFFALO DISTRICT***

OHBA joined efforts urging action to address issues with the Army Corp of Engineers Buffalo District. Industry groups and numerous members of the Ohio Congressional Delegation signed on in support of consolidating Ohio under one district to combat ongoing issues.

***ANNUAL MEETING WITH BUREAU OF WORKERS COMPENSATION ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE***

OHBA held its required meeting with the BWC Association representative on its group rating program, as well as, all other products and services offered by the Bureau.

***OHBA CONTINUED STRONG REPRESENTATION ON BUILDING CODE BOARDS***

Both the Residential Construction Advisory Committee (RCAC) and Board of Building Standards (BBS) include active members of OHBA engaging in the code review and adoption process. Maintaining a reasonable residential building code for Ohio is a top priority for OHBA. This goal is constantly being threatened by more stringent codes being proposed at the National level. Both the IECC and NEC are two recent examples. Fortunately, the Residential Construction Advisory Committee is statutorily required to perform a thorough review of these codes including cost impact and technical feasibility. The members of the RCAC and BBS play a crucial role in keeping Ohio’s code reasonable.

***CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH UTILITY PARTNERS***

Throughout the year, OHBA met with numerous utilities, both gas and electric, to engage the groups on potential development standards or ways to provide more consistent expectations. Additionally, OHBA worked with the Public Utility Commission (PUCO) to explore what comes under its authority.

***SKILLSUSA OHIO TEAMWORKS SPONSORSHIP AND PARTICIPATION***

OHBA continued to be the main sponsor for the SkillsUSA Teamworks competition which brought an impressive turnout of young men and women competing in the various construction trades. Several OHBA past presidents served as judges and volunteered throughout the competition.

***REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF MINIMUM QUANTIFIABLE STANDARDS UPDATES***

As the adopting body of the workmanlike standards for the industry, OHBA reviewed and adopted the Seventh Edition of the Minimum Quantifiable Standards.

***CONTINUING AGENCY AND LEGISLATIVE FOLLOW UP***

While agency issues are always ongoing, many of the legislative issues from 2024 will likely continue into the new year. Throughout the year, OHBA received questions from around the state on enforcement of multiple regulations, including, but not limited to utility, environmental and building code issues. OHBA provided valuable insight and contacts to help mitigate issues brought to OHBA’s attention.

***MONITORED LEGISLATION***

HB 203 Construction Projects; HB 327 Employee Verification; HB 466 Real Estate Transactions; SB 41 Building Inspections; SB 238 Construction Contractors; SB 243 Zoning Regulations; SB 245 Housing;