



Charles County Government

CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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*County Administrator*

March 26, 2021

The Hon. Dereck E. Davis, Chairman  
The Hon. Kathleen M. Dumais, Vice Chairwoman  
and Members of the Economic Matters Committee  
Room 231  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 1262 - Maryland Electricians Act – Revisions

Dear Chairman Davis, Vice Chairwoman Dumais, and members of the Economic Matters Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to OPPOSE H.B. 1262 Maryland Electricians Act Revisions.

The Board of Commissioners for Charles County received the enclosed letter from our Charles County Board of Electrical Examiners, urging opposition to H.B 1262. Our local board is comprised of seasoned and consummate electrical professionals, with several decades of experience. We rely on their judgment and expertise as it relates to ensuring that electricians performing work in Charles County are held to the appropriate standards, and we have been pleased with the care and attention given by this board as it relates to their mission.

We encourage the Economic Matters Committee to consider the concerns raised in the enclosed letter and provide an unfavorable report for H.B 1262. Please note that our Board voted to send this letter by a unanimous vote of all members present 4-0. I was not present for the vote.

Sincerely,

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President  
County Commissioners of Charles County

Enclosure



Charles County

# Board of Electrical Examiners

200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, MD 20646 · 301-638-0804 · [cceb@charlescountymd.gov](mailto:cceb@charlescountymd.gov)

March 16, 2021

Board of County Commissioners  
Charles County Government Building  
200 Baltimore Street  
La Plata, Maryland 20646

RE: Opposition to Proposed Legislation HB1262/SB762  
State Board of Electrical Examiners

To the Honorable Commissioners:

At our February meeting we received a letter issued by the Electric League of Maryland (ELM), a copy of which is attached, informing us of legislation that has been introduced in the 2021 Maryland Legislative Session. We would like to submit this letter as our written testimony in opposition to the pending legislation.

As you are aware, the Charles County Board of Electrical Examiners and Supervisors (the Board), is responsible for examining the qualifications and capabilities of applicants who wish to obtain a Charles County Master or Journeyman electrical license. Each member is principally engaged as a career electrician and is committed to ensuring the integrity of the testing and qualification for each journeyman and master licensed in Charles County. We believe as a core value that the safety of our Charles County residents in their homes and businesses are of paramount importance and believe the pending legislation will have a negative effect on the quality of the electricians performing work in the County. We wish to ensure correct, legal and safe electrical installation in homes and businesses.

HB1262/SB762 proposes changes that phase out the role of the local Board, its licensing and testing responsibilities and ultimately vests the State Board with the responsibility of issuing licenses and enforcing only the minimum standards or qualifications, for journeypersons, apprentices and Master Electricians. Currently, State law requires local jurisdictions to enforce licensing requirements. The local policing of the electrical profession primarily occurs through locally issued permits and locally conducted inspections. In conjunction with the County's building permit office, the local Board is an integral interface for local enforcement of qualifications and requirements.

If the proposed legislation is adopted, we feel very strongly that the ability to address licensing, performance and qualifications on a local level will be severely and negatively affected. Currently, our local Board responds swiftly to issues that occur in Charles County. Within the last year, our board has received and investigated concerns raised by citizens concerning installation of solar panels, substandard work being performed in buildings and during the pandemic, possibility of shortages in equipment needed for wiring in new construction. With the assistance of the building permit inspectors, the inspections office and staff we can address concerns and complaints to our citizens in a timely matter.

In addition, the local Board has the ability and flexibility to meet the licensing needs of our local community for testing, by issuing restricted licenses (limited homeowner projects) and providing personal service to address the inquiries of our residents. The local board has the added benefit of giving the local inspectors a place to bring performance, materials and compliance issues to the attention of the Board for an immediate response because it can be addressed locally. If the proposed legislation is adopted, the local inspectors will be directed to the State office for guidance, and issues will be in the queue along with issues from the other 23 jurisdictions in the State, thereby delaying responses and in some cases, progress during construction, neither of which are in the best interest or welfare of the citizens.

Therefore, we respectfully request the Board of County Commissioners forward our opposition to SB762/HB1262 to our representatives in the General Assembly for consideration as part of the record.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "John Zanellotti".

John Zanellotti, Chairman

As approved by the following members:

John San Luis, Vice Chairman

Gregg Taylor

Thomas Wathen

Attachment



PO Box 4, Fork, MD 21051  
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February 16, 2021

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

The following article is a response by Gil Thompson, Vice President and Legislative Liaison for the Electric League of Maryland. This is his opinion concerning matters affecting the electrical industry.

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I was very surprised on Wednesday afternoon, February 10, 2021, to become aware of two electrical legislative bills (**Senate Bill 762** and **House Bill 1262**) that had been introduced for action in the 2021 Maryland Legislative Session.

Click the following links to read the two bills.

**Senate Bill 762** – [Legislation - SB0762 \(maryland.gov\)](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/bills/sb/sb0762f.pdf)  
<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/bills/sb/sb0762f.pdf>

**House Bill 1262** – [Legislation - HB1262 \(maryland.gov\)](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/bills/hb/hb1262F.pdf)  
<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/bills/hb/hb1262F.pdf>

Surprised – because prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it had been decided by various electrical organizations that any legislative action or procedures to change Maryland’s electrical laws would be put on hold. This would allow representatives from the various groups to provide their input and to discuss major changes to the present law. Various electrical industry leaders wanted to make sure that it would enhance licensing and code regulations, assure that there would be a skilled workforce performing electrical services, and set standards that would entice future applicants and workers so that we would continue to have a viable industry, always keeping in mind that the main purpose was to protect the general public.

As far I know, some individuals and/or organizations decided to introduce this new (but often discussed) legislation without having the various committees meet and become an integral part of the wording for the changes.

I am going to offer my opinion on **Senate Bill 762** by Senator McCray, realizing that **House Bill 1262** by Delegate Hornberger is a companion bill and has the same objective: to change the Maryland Electrical Law being used at the present time (2021) unless changed.

### Note:

1. The new bill will give the State Electrical Board the only or sole regulatory power that will issue electrical licenses.
2. Local electrical administrative boards that now issue a license to operate in their jurisdiction will only be allowed to register (not license) those persons doing electrical services.

3. The local boards will no longer be allowed to test for Master, Journeyman, or Apprentices for licensure unless they are given approval by the State Board. At the present time, there are only five local jurisdictions that license journeymen and their procedures or requirements will probably dry up as journeymen will be required to mandatorily hold a State License so why would a person pay two fees when one would suffice?
4. The 22 local jurisdictions that now issue licenses may have to change their local law to accommodate the new way to register rather than license electricians in their jurisdictions.
5. The new law will also require all persons who provides electrical services to be regulated and licensed by the State Board. However, there is a provision that will allow local jurisdictions to regulate those persons who are registered by them. However, the final decision about licenses will be made by the State Electrical Board.
6. The local boards will have to provide records and information about any new registrations, reciprocity agreements, violations of their local regulations, and any other information required by the State Board on an annual basis.
7. There could be some questions raised about the continuing education provisions. Will the State requirement satisfy any local requirements that are now needed? It has been assumed that the ten hours of State regulations will satisfy the continuing education clause, but it is not written so everyone can understand it.
8. There also could be a question about testing of electricians, as the State Board will have the only authority, unless given approval to various boards. (There is no provision of what it takes to be approved.)
9. The State Board will seem to use the questions for the exams submitted by MUELEC. There is also a provision that they can appoint a committee to develop test questions.
10. There could also be a question raised about the local variances or exceptions to the National Electrical Code. Local variances should be included in Part (3) which will provide a State-wide code within 18 months of adoption by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association).
11. There was to be a provision to license low voltage electricians at the submission of the new change to the law. Discussion on voltage limitations had hopefully been resolved and that industry could be included in the present law to have the same benefits of one insurance policy covering them State-wide and also be able to take advantage of the (“passport provision”) – and reciprocity.

Here is a synopsis, given by the bill writer, and I want you, as a supporter, a member, and reader, to obtain your own copy of the bills and make your own determination. Please note that by July 1, 2021, jurisdictions will no longer be allowed to license Master, Journeyman, or Apprentices.

*“Altering the powers and duties of the State Board of Master Electricians; changing the name of the State Board of Master Electricians to the State Board of Electricians; requiring the Department, by December 1, 2024, to adopt regulations necessary for the regulation and licensing*

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*of low-voltage electricians if certain legislation establishing a certain licensing program is not enacted by July 1, 2024; prohibiting, beginning on a certain date, local jurisdictions from issuing certain licenses, etc.”*

As the bill is written, it gives the State sole regulatory power of licensing but accomplishes State-wide master, journeyman, and apprentices licensing and other regulatory powers looked for in the past such as: having a Master or Journeyman on every job and that proper signs and advertisement be consistent, as well as allowing local jurisdictions to continue to function.

If you, as an electrician or a local jurisdictional authority, are willing to give up licensing for registration, local testing (unless approved), and to take on the red tape and time schedules of the State Board, then you have to make up your mind as to whether you will support or reject these latest bills. Remember – sometimes the State Board does not have enough members to even have a quorum for a meeting and because of other regulatory issues, they even table or postpone some decisions. A question should be raised: Is there enough clerical help to take on six to eight thousand more licenses and the ability to resolve problems that arise in the electrical trade across the State?

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that sometimes State regulations and oversight are not the most logical answer.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gilbert L. Thompson  
Vice President and Legislative Liaison for the ELM

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