

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Michigan State Conference
Statement on House Bill 4648
June 8, 2021

The IBEW Michigan State Conference represents over 12,000 union electricians across the state. We are opposed to House Bill 4648, a bill that seeks to recreate various construction code commissions that were abolished several years ago. The IBEW supported the elimination of these commissions at the time, and we oppose their reconstitution now.

On paper, multiple code committees made up of appointed stakeholders from throughout the construction industry being placed in charge of reviewing and recommending construction code updates seems reasonable, if unwieldy. However, in practice, this design proved to be amazingly inefficient. Michigan found itself increasingly behind national construction standards due to delays in various code committees reaching consensus. It is very difficult to maintain quality apprenticeship training programs when Michigan's construction codes are lagging behind surrounding states.

Since Michigan switched to a system in which departmental staff craft code update proposals, members of the IBEW have found the process to be greatly improved. Our members can submit comments and make recommendations directly to department staff, resulting in positive changes made to code update proposals. We feel that the responsiveness to comments and critiques from the general public has greatly improved since the old code commissions were abolished. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has again slowed down the code update process, we are hopeful that it will become much more efficient than the previous system once the pandemic ebbs.

While we understand the political appeal of appointing dozens of industry stakeholders to these myriad commissions, we do not believe that such a move would serve the public or the construction industry well. We respectfully urge Michigan lawmakers to oppose House Bill 4648.