



February 11, 2017

Chair Beyer and members of the committee,

I'm writing today to encourage your support for Senate Bill 25 which would bring about badly needed changes to residential contractor continuing education rules. First, permit me to introduce myself.

My name is Bob Strong. I have been a licensed general contractor since 1997, when I formed the company Oregon's Home Handyman. As the name implies, I am not a home builder or a remodeler. Nor am I a specialty contractor, although I have a very broad skillset. For about 16 of the past 20 years, I specialized in residential maintenance and repair. A typical day found me replacing the drinking water filters under a kitchen counter, changing burned out light bulbs, repairing the hole in a wall made by a doorknob, rebuilding a toilet or a kitchen faucet, and installing a pet door so the dog could get out of the garage on his own. As a "Jack of all Trades", I frequently attended classes offered by manufacturers of the products and tools I used, but those didn't qualify as continuing education toward my license renewal requirement.

In January, 2016, I registered the DBA, EnviroTest, to provide environmental testing services for other contractors. As part of my training, I became a Certified Asbestos Building Inspector which required 24 hours of classroom instruction. I also completed a 16-hour class in Residential Radon Measurement. None of this training qualifies as continuing education toward my license renewal, even though I am required to hold a current CCB license in order to do the asbestos inspection.

In March of 2016, a day-long event known as BuildRight was sponsored by the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland. The mini-classes taught during this event were pre-approved for CE credit, so I opted to attend in order to "bank" a portion of my required number of hours for license renewal. I received credit for the following:

- Take Your Remodeling Business to the Next Level
- Marketing and Selling the Better Built Home
- Building ADU's; Challenges and Opportunities
- Using Installed Technology to Increase Profits and Customer Satisfaction
- The Latest Legal Advice for Contractors

At best, only two of them could arguably be beneficial to my business.

Probably the most glaring example of the need to re-think how CE's are granted came right after the first of the year. January is National Radon Action Month. On the 18th of January, the Northwest Radon Coalition, consisting of representatives from the American Lung Association, Portland State University, Oregon Health Authority, Multnomah County Health Department and five local radon testing and mitigation companies, presented the annual *Radon Forum Northwest* at Adventist Medical Center in SE Portland. Speakers included an MD, a PhD, and two engineers. This was an evening event, open to the general public.

In order to attract realtors, who have a definite need to know about radon, permission was granted to offer 2 hours of continuing education credit. Unfortunately, when I approached the CCB with a similar request, I learned that it was not an approved course, nor was it being taught by an approved trainer. That night, one third of our audience was made up of realtors. The only contractors in attendance were the licensed radon mitigation companies, in spite of the fact that one of the topics was Radon-Resistant New Construction. This is something every contractor is required to include when building a home, yet most do not do understand it and many do not install it correctly.

Why did so many realtors show up for the training when no building contractors did? They both have a need to know. The only difference I see is that a "reward" was offered to the realtors. Shouldn't contractors also have an opportunity to gain credit for attending relevant training? After all, we are required to take continuing education.

Thank you for taking on this important topic. I'm optimistic that someday I'll be able to attend training that relates to my specialty and receive continuing education credit for having attended.

Respectfully,

Robert Strong
Oregon's Home Handyman, LLC
dba EnviroTest