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 Assemblyman 81st District
 Bronx County

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November 17, 2014

Hon. Audrey Zibelman
 Chair, Public Service Commission
 Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 3
 Albany, NY 12223-1350

Re: Public Service Commission - Case #: 14G-0357

Dear Chairwoman Zibelman,

We are writing to you on an urgent issue that will affect the residents and the more than 150 plumbing contractors operating in the Bronx.

It has come to our attention that the Department of Public Service has proposed amending the definition of a gas "service line" at the request of the federal government. This proposal as it stands will put a serious financial strain on plumbing contractors in our borough and it will kill jobs.

The Department of Public Service, in seeking to conform to the federal definition of "service line," will trigger existing regulations harmful to the licensed master plumbers working in the Bronx and throughout New York City. These regulations will force licensed master plumbers to obtain an "operator qualified" certification and then contract with the utility to perform work on about 10 feet of pipe that is void of any gas. It is important to note that licensed master plumbers without incident have done this work for decades.

The Northeast Gas Association last week issued a report that states this proposed regulation will cost the plumbing and utility industry upwards of \$55 million to implement the "operator qualified" certification, guaranteeing job losses for many hard working plumbers.

Further, this proposal falls woefully short of existing New York City licensing and safety laws, which have been a model for other municipalities around the nation. As an example, New York City requires those seeking to obtain master plumber status to complete upwards of 10,000 hours of supervised work.

The members of the Bronx Assembly Delegation commend the commission's focus on protecting state residents. However, this legislative body has set precedent by acknowledging

the uniqueness of New York City and its laws by providing special exemptions from certain state laws.

Therefore, we urge the Public Service Commission before it approves any regulations, to provide an exemption for licensed master plumbers from the "operator qualification" provisions in current law.

We appreciate your time and willingness to hear our concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Dinowitz, Chair

Carmen Arroyo

Carl E. Heastie

Jose Rivera

Michael R. Benedetto

Marcos A. Crespo

Mark Gjonai

Luis R. Sepulveda

Victor Pichardo

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