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January 21, 2022

Sen. Michael Sirotkin
Members, Senate Economic Development Committee
Statehouse, 115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Senator Sirotkin and Members of the Committee,

We write in support of H.157 relating to consumer protection, outreach, and education with respect to home construction, repair, and improvement.

Over the years hundreds, if not thousands, of Vermonters have reported consumer losses totaling in the millions of dollars related to work they hope will improve the most important asset they have: their homes. Complaints range from poor performance, to lack of insurance, to failure to perform, or theft of deposit monies. In the last two years alone more than 200 Vermonters report losses totaling more than \$2 million to the Office of the Attorney General.

Most other states have implemented some form of regulation to implement the best practices of the industry. But, Vermont has lagged. And, while many contractors not only do right by Vermonters, but set the bar for professional standards – others have failed to perform as Vermonters expect. In fact, our offices have heard testimony from many excellent contractors called in to correct defective conditions, or failures by those who have failed to deliver for their customers.

No law can solve every problem. However, currently there is no administrative oversight of this important profession. Setting a simple standard for registration, insurance, and a written contract is a good first step that could provide relief to homeowners and build confidence in both the industry and in government's ability to respond effectively to complaints.

The elements before you are neither burdensome, nor costly. The majority of Vermonters we heard from in public hearings throughout the state and through the sunrise review support some form of meaningful regulation. The bill before you is a modest, common sense step in the right direction that we support. We urge the Senate to pass this important legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Curtis
Chief, Public Protection Division
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S. Lauren Hibbert
Director, Office of Professional Regulation
Office of the Vermont Secretary of State