

Roofer Registration Legislation Could Help Consumers

Roofers Advocate for Registration: As Legislation Session Evolves, Registration Becomes the Bipartisan Answer to Protect Roofing Consumers



JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Legislation to register roofers to protect consumers in Missouri is moving forward after discussions over whether to license the contractors or to ask them to register.

After some discussion, the industry decided to push for the less regulatory and burdensome registration process, rather than a strict licensing process.

The goal of the legislation is to protect consumers from bad-actors who come in after a storm and ultimately cause more damage than they were trying to fix, as Jason Shupp, a third-

generation roofer, president of Ferguson Roofing and past president of the Roofing and Siding Contractors Alliance, Inc., emphasized.

“The genesis of this whole process was to protect customers. With my business, we have seen this for many generations, but any roofer who’s reputable and has worked in the industry for a period of time is going to have their share of cases that they had to come behind and pick up where a couple of homeowners had been taken advantage of and it’s becoming more of a chronic practice,” he said.



Shupp

The roofing industry has generated more than 500 attorney general complaints over the last couple of years and Shupp says it’s consistently rated as one of the top 10 disreputable industries by the Better Business Bureau. The goal of the legislation, SB 1022, would be to allow the reputable contractors to operate without being plagued by bad-actor contractors who see a way to make some quick money after a storm.

“In our industry in particular, because so much of it is now being driven by storm, hail or wind storms, that create this huge surge of business opportunity all of a sudden and because of the low barrier for entry in our industry, we’ve seen a lot more people trying to get involved in our industry in order to make a quick buck,” Shupp said. “Unfortunately, making a quick buck is at the disadvantage of customers.”

Homeowners can be taken advantage of by roofing contractors through fraud, bad business practices such as taking deposits and not completing work, not honoring warranties, and poor workmanship. The goal of registration would be to reduce some of those issues.

To register, contractors must be properly insured per minimum industry standards with current certificates and with the state as a certificate holder, have insurance for all business vehicles and have a liability insurance policy with a minimum of one million dollars, among other requirements. Registration costs would be paid for by fees not taxpayer’s money.

Shupp says reputable contractors would display their registration numbers, making it easier for homeowners to check on the status of the people fixing their homes after a storm.

The legislation would also bring Missouri on board with neighboring states, especially Illinois, which has a strict licensing process, and Kansas which has a registration process.

While Shupp says there has been some debate within the industry over how to protect consumers, ultimately that and improving the industry's reputation are their main goals.

"This is absolutely a consumer advocacy legislation. This is not at all about Missouri contractors trying to protect market share. That's not the goal of it at all," he said.

"The concept of registration was introduced and that's what we're all standing behind because registration allows for a mandatory form of registration so that everyone, in-state or out-of-state, are impacted by this," Shupp said. "It's also the least burdensome and least regulatory way of doing that. We're all playing by the same rules, but it's not going to be over burdensome. It should still have the effectiveness to provide a good incremental step to provide customer advocacy, protect them better than they are protected now and raise the professionalism of our industry."

The legislation passed out of committee last month and is not currently on a Senate calendar.