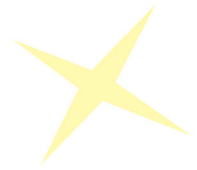




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National Association of Home Inspectors, Inc. (NAHI) Position on the Creation of a National Standard for Home Inspection

(Minneapolis, MN) – This past February, home inspection industry stakeholders came together with ASTM International to discuss the creation of a national standard for home inspection. At that meeting, NAHI was pleased with the number of individuals from our association, and others, who supported holding a subsequent meeting to further consider the creation of a national standard. The NAHI Board of Directors values each member's voice in this discussion, and while we hope you will take the time to attend the next meeting, we understand that many cannot. This is why NAHI solicited your opinion via an all-member survey that ran from Wednesday, August 15th until Monday, August 20th. We are not aware if other associations have provided their members the same opportunity.

Of those who responded, an overwhelming 77.6 percent support the creation of a national standard. Only after seeking extensive member input is the NAHI Board of Directors comfortable in its position that a national standard is an industry evolution worthy of NAHI's support. While many fear the implications a national standard will have, we believe the positive effects far outweigh the negatives. Below we address some of the concerns that have been raised.

The Consumer (Client) Perspective

One of the reasons we support a national standard is to assist in protecting consumers. This is at the core of what NAHI members do every day. Our members go about the business of providing quality home inspection services that allow consumers to make a more informed purchase. Consumers demand the same quality service from our members over and over again, from their first home to their last.

Consumers are mobile, but their expectations are not. This also applies to home inspection services. Whether buying a home in Pennsylvania or California, each client demands a consistent minimum measure of service. Further, whether purchasing a home now or in the future, a consistent minimum standard of practice is part of this expectation.

A Minimum Standard Will Hurt the Industry

Some argue that a national standard will lead to a homogenized minimum standard that will hurt the industry. Even today, with the permeation of association and state standards used throughout the country, isn't each standard a minimum standard? The market determines how far above your standard you'll be required to go. For example, NAHI standards say nothing about inspecting appliances or pools, but some markets expect it, and home inspectors go above their minimum standard every day. A national standard will do nothing to limit the way in which you continue to meet the expectations of your client.

Further, we are not reinventing the wheel. The basis by which any national standard of practice is created will certainly begin with current consistencies from throughout the industry. The collective expertise of home inspectors that are responsible for the industry's current standards will be leveraged in the creation of any national standard.

Liability of the Home Inspector

As many home inspectors know, one cost of doing business is that you may someday find yourself in court. In that event, it's your word and your standard of practice, against the consumer's expectation. Today, courts have numerous standards in which to compare. A national standard provides one measurement that courts can look to in determining whether your inspection meets the demands of the consumer. It makes sense to have the reputation of ASTM International and the collective support of the home inspection industry behind you if you must defend your standard of practice in a court of law against a disgruntled client's expectation. No current standard can protect you to that degree.

ASTM International is the recognized leader in standards creation. That reputation extends into the legal process. Bottom line, a legitimate national standard will limit your liability.

Our Current System Works Fine

Many states have adopted standards that are specifically cited in law as belonging to or closely mirroring the standard of one association. This consolidates standard creating power within that association. When a state adopts the standard of a specific association, you are then required to conform to how that association thinks you should perform a home inspection. In NAHI's view this is a blatant abuse of the public policy process, and has not been openly addressed by our collective industry. A national standard for the industry, by the industry, will protect against this abuse.

Other Stakeholders

Many argue that the process for creating a national standard that allows for the inclusion of other stakeholders will dilute the standard. In truth, the collective interest of the home inspection industry and our expertise will be well represented in this process. For a national standard to be approved, it must achieve a 90% "yes" vote of the members on the ASTM committee, with all "no" votes cast during the balloting process being resolved. Without our industry's support, no standard will pass.

In the End

In the end, we all have something at stake in this prospect of a national standard of practice. So do the clients we make a living protecting every day. For its part, NAHI does not fear this process as others have publicly pronounced before fully understanding the process or seeking their members input. We believe that our industry can stand for something other than the singular interests we see every day when reading the home inspection message boards and blogs.

It is through our collective effort in creating a national standard that we continue legitimizing home inspection as a value-added and critical component of the real estate transaction. The result is more business for everyone.

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