

February 12, 2012

OPM Task Force,

I would like to comment on the AzPPO Town Hall meeting that was held by AzPPO (Arizona Pest Professional Organization) in Tucson on January 26, 2012. For your convenience, you will find a video of the meeting at:

<http://its-our-turn.com/OpmTaskForce.html>

and I will reference the time stamps in the video so you can conveniently go back and listen to everything that was said.

Courtney LeVinus (Capitol Consulting - lobbyist, PR and administration for AzPPO) ran the meeting. She started her presentation at 11:15.

The discussion started with QPs. At 18:15 Nathan Waters (Cummings Termite) and Pest Control was the first to speak for retaining or even increasing the requirements for QPs. He was blatant that he wanted to increase the barriers to entry at multiple times during the meeting.

At 22:55 Jason Fletcher (Fletcher Termite Control) commented that the testing for a QP was nearly identical to the testing for an applicator - perhaps asking few more questions on the QP exam. He asked: What good is a QP if you are an applicator taking the exact same test. Jack Peterson (OPM) responded that OPM did not want to keep track of 20 applicators, but could keep track of one QP. But that is what a business license is for - a single point of contact for a company. Jason in later conversation also pointed out the fallacy of having a QP be in charge of a large number of people. Jason also pointed out that in 14 years, not once was he trained by a QP.

There were many different people - mostly AzPPO members - who discussed why there was a need for complexity and the QP should be kept. However, there were many independent business owners that felt the QP was not needed.

At 34:00, Courtney LeVinus asked for a show of hands for who would want to keep the QP. Phyllis Farenga (Its-Our-Turn.com) pointed out that it was premature to ask such a question because there had not been much discussion about QPs and there had been no discussion on alternative ways to organize the industry, such as the Title 3 method used by agriculture - after the audience was informed. When Courtney asked about keeping the 3000 hour requirement, Steve Thies (AAA Bee Control) pointed out that having the same requirements for weed control and fumigation made no sense at all. Jason Fletcher commented that the 3000 hour requirement was intended to keep people out. Steve Thies talked about the issue of getting an employer to provide the verification because many are not willing to provide it because they do not want a new competitor.

At 46:45 Jim O'Keefe (Eagle Exterminating) pointed out that all of the laws in the world are not going to stop someone from trying to make a living - even if it is unlicensed pest control - so you might as well make the laws reasonable. Also, if you are an experienced applicator and want to run your own business, why do you need a whole other level of requirements? Why shouldn't you be able to go and get a business license and start your own company. Jim argued with Nathan about why there was a need to create barriers to entry. Jim also pointed out that the pest control industry only applies around 17% of all pesticides and that the rest are applied by homeowners - and they have not been harmed in the process.

There was significant discussion on QPs and there was no consensus to keep the qualifying party. However, everyone agreed that someone has to be responsible. And many people suggested that testing could be improved.

At 1:22:40 the discussion moved on to TARFs because it would be "less controversial".

The TARFs issues came down to the following:

- 1: people use the database to determine if the building is still under warranty - because the consumer cannot be bothered to keep track of their own warranty for 5 years.
- 2: TARF fees are used to fund the general fund - and should not be. However, OPM has become dependent on the fee.
- 3: fear that the legislature will not look kindly on getting rid of the TARFs.
- 4: no one thought there was any need to WDIR data in the database.
- 5: the folks who want the database should pay for the database.
- 6: TARF fees bring in \$1.2 out of \$1.7 million used by OPM

It was pointed out that the roughly 1200 business licenses and 7000 applicator licenses would take roughly \$214 per license to cover the OPM budget.

At 1:45:50 the discussion moved to continuing education. People are encouraged to take different course each year instead of taking the same classes year after year.

The Tucson Town Hall meeting was quite different from the Tempe meeting with a much more vibrant discussion of topics. Please be sure to listen to the video in its entirety.

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