



Rockland County Legislature Issues Statement Following Approval of Sweeping Home Improvement Law Overhaul



The Rockland County Legislature has issued an official statement following its approval of a comprehensive overhaul of the county's Home Improvement Contractors Law, replacing a framework that had remained largely unchanged since 1984.

The newly adopted local law rescinds and replaces multiple prior laws enacted between 1984 and 2016, fully rewriting Chapter 286 of the Rockland County Code governing home improvement contractors.

According to Legislature Chairman Jay Hood Jr., the update is designed to modernize the system, improve efficiency, and strengthen protections for both contractors and homeowners.

"There has been a lot of misinformation circulating about this update, but the truth is simple: this law was adopted to make things better for both contractors and consumers," Hood said. "It streamlines the licensing process, establishes clear timelines, strengthens protections for homeowners, and ensures qualified contractors can get to work without unnecessary delays." A central change under the new law is the shift in licensing authority. While contractors must still obtain a county license, the responsibility to approve or deny applications will now rest with the Director of the Rockland County Office of Consumer Protection, rather than the Home Improvement Licensing Board.

The Board will remain in place in an advisory capacity.

The law establishes, for the first time, firm deadlines for the licensing process. The county must act on applications within 45 days, with limited extensions, or the license may be automatically approved. Any denial must include specific reasons and provide applicants with the right to appeal to the Legislature.

Rockland County Legislator Itamar Yeger, who introduced the measure, emphasized that the changes do not expand the Legislature's authority over licensing decisions.

"Nothing in this law gives the Legislature new powers over licensing decisions, and the volunteer Board continues to play an important advisory role," Yeger said. "These changes modernize a system that hadn't been updated in decades, making it fairer, faster, and more transparent for everyone involved."

The revised law significantly expands consumer protections. Contractors are now required to use only licensed and insured subcontractors, maintain liability, workers' compensation, and disability insurance, and follow stricter contract requirements. These include written agreements for projects over \$500, mandatory disclosures, and a three-day cancellation period for homeowners.

The law also introduces new compliance requirements for contractors who arrange financing, mandates a minimum one-year workmanship warranty, and requires that all customer funds be treated as trust funds tied directly to project expenses.

To streamline operations, the law creates simplified and expedited licensing pathways, particularly for contractors licensed in other jurisdictions for at least five years without complaints.

It also removes certain outdated requirements, such as decals for personal vehicles, while maintaining identification requirements for commercial vehicles or job sites.

Additional provisions include new enforcement tools, such as civil penalties of up to \$3,000 per violation, the ability to suspend or revoke licenses for noncompliance, and the authority to seize vehicles or equipment used in unlicensed operations under certain conditions.

The law also clarifies definitions across the industry, formally distinguishing between general contractors, subcontractors, and project managers, and outlines which types of work require licensing. Certain professions, including licensed plumbers, electricians, architects, and engineers, remain exempt when operating within their regulated fields.

Officials said the overhaul was driven in part by longstanding complaints from contractors regarding delays and inconsistencies in licensing, as well as concerns from homeowners about incomplete or substandard work.

The measure passed overwhelmingly in the Legislature, with 14 members voting in favor and one opposed.

County officials noted that, as with any major legislative update, further refinements may be made in the coming months as the new system is implemented.