

1773 St. Ann Street  
Victoria, BC, V8R 5V7  
March 28, 2017

Senator Lee Beyer  
Chair, Senate Committee on Business and Transportation  
900 Court Street, NE, S-411  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Senator Beyer and Committee Members

RE: Support for SB 885 - Professional Engineer Registration

I am writing in support of SB 885 and do so with apologies for not appearing before you in person. I write in my current capacities as the Association of Professional Engineers of British Columbia (APEGBC)'s delegate to the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) and PNWER's Private Sector Co-Chair (Canada). Additionally, I do so in my personal capacities as a practicing professional engineer and Past President of APEGBC and of Engineers Canada.

As sponsored by Senator Roblan, SB 885 would reasonably enhance the current authority of the Oregon Board of Examiners in Engineering and Land Surveying (OSBEELS) to evaluate the qualifications of experienced professional engineers under ORS 672.103 who are currently licensed in other states and countries (notably, Canada) whose systems of licensure, including criteria such as accredited university engineering education, engineer in training mentorship, professional registration, continuing professional development, practice review, investigation and discipline were determined to be at least equivalent to those under Oregon's statutes and administrative rules.

In my several capacities cited above, and as part of a long history of attendances by Chairs and Executive Officers at each other others' national and other meetings, I have met with officials and attended numerous state, regional and national meetings of state boards, the National Council of Examiners in Engineering and Land Surveying (NCEES, the umbrella body of the state boards), the national Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the National Society of Professional Engineers.

As a result, I can affirm to you that, in my personal opinion, and in those of numerous leaders of the aforementioned national American engineering bodies, you may have confidence that Canada's nationally uniform process governing the registration and practice of its professional engineers is, in fact, at least equivalent to that of Oregon's. In referring SB 885 to the full Senate for approval, Oregon would be following a process previously taken, without regret, by the neighboring states of Idaho, Nevada and Texas. Within the PNWER region, Oregon's action would also encourage Washington's Board to promulgate its comity licensure rules, which in turn would provide encouragement to Alaska (which currently waives the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam with eight years of experience) and ultimately, Montana thus fulfilling a long standing PNWER action item of its statutory members, which Oregon's representatives have supported, to achieve comity licensure throughout the PNWER region.

Passage of SB 885 would also be equitable with the many years of practice of the licensing bodies of PNWER's Canadian members who license American professional engineers, with ABET accredited engineering degrees and eight years of post licensure experience, on the basis being proposed (ie without further technical examination).

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Concern has been expressed by some that passage of SB 885 could lead to a lessening of professional engineering standards of practice. With appropriate administrative rules in place (such as those adopted by Idaho) however, this has not proven to be the case in the neighboring states mentioned above. Given the demands for engineers throughout the region and the complexities and costs of relocation, the numbers of engineers seeking licensure under the proposed comity provisions are not forecast to be large. One intangible benefit that could result is a broadening of professional ethics across the engineering community as more engineers from other jurisdictions would be incented to seek licensure rather than have their designs and reports sealed by a currently registered member.

In the interests of full disclosure, through telephone conversation with Mr. Matt Cash, I am aware of the proposed amendments to SB 885 that he may bring forward on behalf of Professional engineers Oregon (PEO) to address the above concern. While my Canadian professional engineering colleagues, and my American ones who are knowledgeable of Canada's licensing regime, do not believe his proposed amendments to be necessary (and that eight years post licensure experience, ie twelve years post graduation, is a reasonable threshold), we could accept the amended language in sections (1)(b), (2) and (3) provided the administrative rules to determine equivalency in (1)(b) that would subsequently be promulgated by OSBEELS did not negate the intent of SB 885.

My engineering and PNWER colleagues very much look forward to the passage of SB 885. Celebration of this contribution to the growing of our regional economy at PNWER's July Summit meeting in Portland would most welcomed as Senator Roblan assumes its Presidency.

If it would be the Committee's pleasure to have me testify by telephone at its Monday, March 27 hearing, I can be reached by cell phone at 604 649 8464.

Respectfully Submitted,

***Colin Smith***

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