



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE  
REGARDING SB269

March 6, 2012

I am Robert Zygmunt, PE, SECB, Board Member of the Structural Engineers Coalition (SEC), representing approximately 175 structural engineers providing independent engineering services to the public and private sector.

On behalf of SEC, I would like to speak in favor of SB 269, AN ACT CONCERNING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS AND REQUIRING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS.

The practice of structural engineering is changing rapidly and becoming increasingly complex. Expanded knowledge of earthquake effects, wind and other extreme load cases have greatly increased complexity of building codes and standards. Technological advances enable more complicated analyses with complex software; while owners have higher expectations for building performance. All of these changes require an increase in knowledge and skill on the part of the structural engineer. In recognition of this trend, in April 2011, the National Council of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors (NCEES) replaced the two, 8 hour SE I and SE II examinations with a single 16 hour structural engineering examination. NCEES issued a model law structural engineer definition as someone who has passed this new 16 hour examination.

Over the last year, SEC has established and supported a Licensing Committee to investigate and advocate structural engineer licensing in Connecticut. The primary goal of this committee is to better protect the health, welfare and safety of the public. Currently 11 states have some form of SE licensure and several more are in the process.

The SEC Licensing Committee has drafted legislative language which would require those buildings which are large or complex (exceed the threshold limits stated in Connecticut General Statutes Section 29-276b) be designed by a Professional Structural Engineer. Most buildings would not need to be designed by a Professional Structural Engineer, nor would bridges and other non-building structures. There will be a transitional period which will allow practicing structural engineers with an active Connecticut Professional Engineer license to obtain a Professional Structural Engineer license without passing any additional exams.

The SEC Licensing Committee has had several meetings with state agencies and design professional organizations to gather comments and to gain support. These groups include: the state licensing board, Department of Construction Services, the Connecticut Chapter of the

## **Proposed Separate Licensing of Structural Engineers in Connecticut**



### **Why is a Structural Engineer (SE) License necessary?**

The primary goal for proposing a SE License in Connecticut is to increase public life safety. Over the past several years, building codes and design guides have become much more complex which has greatly increased the complexity of design. Implementation of these codes and guides should be performed by individuals qualified to practice structural engineering. A separate SE License would be a specialty license and a subcategory of a CT Professional Engineer license which would be required for complex buildings.

### **I'm a practicing structural engineer with an active PE license, how do I obtain a SE License?**

The intent of this license is not to affect practicing structural engineers. As of the date of adoption, any practicing structural engineer with an active CT Professional Engineer license would have 12 months from their next license renewal date to apply for an SE License thru a transition clause. This would allow qualified licensed structural engineers to continue practicing without having to meet all the requirements of the new partial practice act.

### **How would the transitioning process work?**

During the transition process period, an SE License could be granted any one of the following ways:

1. Applicant must complete a form which will describe the engineer's professional structural design and engineering experience, provide professional references that attest to the engineer's structural engineering capability and submit a signed affidavit which states that the engineer is currently engaged in the practice of structural engineering.
2. Applicant successfully completed the 16 hour NCEES PE Structural Engineering exam.
3. Applicant is an active member of the Structural Engineering Certification Board (SECB).
4. Applicant has an active SE License from another state.

### **If you aren't granted an SE license through the transition process, how would you obtain a SE License?**

If you miss the transition application period, or do not qualify at that time, the applicants would be required to successfully complete the 16 hour NCEES PE Structural Engineering exam in addition to meeting the current CT statutes (Sec.20-302) for a Professional Engineer (graduation from college approved by the board, specific record of four years of structural engineering experience, etc). Other than engineers who apply for an SE license through the transition process, you would not need a PE license prior to obtaining a SE license.

### **Would every building be required to be designed by a SE?**

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American Institute of Architects, Construction Institute, Connecticut Society of Professional Engineers and Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers.

The SEC Licensing Committee has submitted wording that we would like to see incorporated into the final bill. Attached is a document which addresses frequently asked questions regarding the SE licensure.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any of your questions.

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