



NATIONAL SOCIETY OF
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

The Need for Licensure of Professional Engineers

The narrative around licensure needs to change and recognize the vital role played by our regulatory system in protecting the public health, safety, and welfare.

The Issue

The debate over the government's role in regulating occupations and professions has recently come to the forefront. While the work of professional engineers—like that of doctors, registered architects, and attorneys—clearly affects the public health, safety, and welfare, it is becoming increasingly commonplace for policymakers to categorize highly educated and trained PEs with less rigorous lines of work in the debate over eliminating occupational licenses.

The Narrative

A commonly repeated but inaccurate narrative is that all licensing requirements are the same and that all barriers to entry should, therefore, be removed. However, a closer examination shows that those professions that are necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare need licensing requirements to ensure that only technically and professionally qualified individuals are practicing in their fields.

Why the PE License

Professional engineers shoulder the responsibility, not just for a project, but for public safety. PEs conceptualize, plan, design, and construct bridges, tunnels, buildings, wastewater treatment facilities, plants, factories, processing centers, and many other public and private development projects.

To become licensed as a professional engineer, an applicant must meet specific education, examination, and experience requirements. Violation of state requirements can result in disciplinary actions and even license revocation. A professional engineer's foremost responsibility is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare, and the current licensing system for engineers is designed to ensure this protection.

For more information on engineering licensure, please visit www.nspe.org/licensure.