

2019

# Key Issues for the Professional Engineer



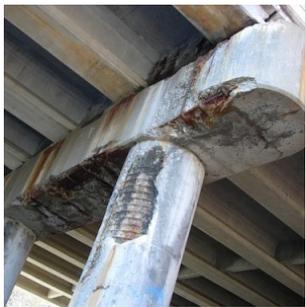
*What are the top legislative and regulatory threats professional engineers are facing in 2019?*

## **Defense of Professional Licensure**

Organizations like the American Legislative Exchange Council and the Institute for Justice continue their attack on professional licensing with legislation including “consumer choice” provisions, which allow anyone to practice any occupation, unlicensed, as long as they disclose their status to the consumer. Such legislation assumes market forces are adequate to protect public health and safety. NSPE advocates for the protection of the engineering license against these threats, and promotes more stringent laws that would better protect public health, safety, and welfare.

## **Infrastructure**

In recent years, numerous studies have sounded the alarm regarding the nation’s crumbling infrastructure. Congressional leaders have said infrastructure is high on their priority list. Funding levels as high as \$1 trillion have been proposed by both parties, and spending plans include much-needed bridge and road repairs, expansion and improved accessibility to high-speed internet, high-speed rail system expansion, school building repairs and upgrades, and improvements to ports and inland waterways. A strong infrastructure package could mean over a million new related jobs, some of which will be in various engineering fields.



## **License Mobility**

License mobility – how easy it is for a PE to get licensed in multiple jurisdictions - continues to be a trending issue, especially as it relates to military families and veterans. In a January, 2018 op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta urged states to form multistate compacts that allow licensed professionals to more easily work across state lines. In response, the South Dakota House of Representatives introduced a bill (HB 1319) that would have done exactly that, by issuing temporary licenses within 30 days of having received an application from an engineer who’s already licensed in another jurisdiction.

In addition, NSPE was recently alerted to a joint study being conducted by the Army, Navy and Air Force about licensing processes and reciprocity among states. According to the letter, these branches of the Armed Services intend to use information about licensing reciprocity as part of their decision matrix when determining where to send resources and personnel.

## **STEM Education Funding**

NSPE continues to prioritize development of and funding for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education programs in K-12 and higher education. Several federal STEM bills have recently been introduced, including the INSPIRES Act, introduced near the end of 2018 by Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), which authorized \$200 million for STEM education facilities that serve rural and Native American communities. NSPE will continue working with state and federal lawmakers to ensure STEM education is properly funded.