Wednesday, June 24, 2020

Governor Brian Kemp
206 Washington Street
Suite 203, State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Governor Kemp,

The National Society of Professional Engineers is a member organization that was established in 1934 to address the professional concerns of licensed PEs across all disciplines. NSPE’s members have risen to the top of their fields through intense training, licensing, continuing education, and leadership. They stand by a Code of Ethics to exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity, and we proudly represent their interests in myriad subject matters, including state and federal legislative actions.

To that end, I’m writing to urge you to veto Senate Bill 310, which creates a separate licensing scheme for structural engineers.

The first engineering licensure law was enacted in 1907, and since then has served to assure the public that their health, safety and welfare are of the highest priority. By combining their specialized skills with their high standards for ethics and quality assurance, PEs shoulder the responsibility not only for their work, but also for the lives affected by that work.

Creating a new licensing system specific to structural engineering does not improve the public health, safety, or welfare. Instead, it muddies the water, creating confusion and requiring regulatory authorities to make arbitrary distinctions to define structural engineering. Rather than reducing regulatory burdens, the change would add a new layer, requiring one engineer to obtain multiple licenses in order to do work that, previously, required only one.

If the goal of S.B. 310 is to keep Georgia PEs competitive, that goal would be better achieved via a certification process that occurs after the professional engineering license has already been obtained. This system would allow for the SE designation, if required or requested by potential employers or RFPs, without drawing the same, hard line between structural and other types of engineering.

A certification process allows more flexibility and would give Georgia PEs a competitive advantage over professionals whose practice is limited to structural engineering.
We understand that those who support this bill hired professional lobbyists to advocate for this added layer of regulation because it serves their corporate interests. NSPE does not have or hire professional lobbyists, but we nonetheless advocate strongly on behalf of the engineering profession, especially when proposed changes like those in S.B. 310 add undue burdens to professional licensure.

I encourage you to veto this bill, and request that the Georgia legislature instead create a post-licensure certification, as it first intended.

The state and national societies stand ready to be a resource in the development of a certification process.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Tricia Hatley, P.E., F.NSPE
President-Elect