

August 6, 2018

The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
503 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill,

The National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) is deeply concerned about the recent tragic duck boat accident in Branson, Missouri. NSPE's condolences go out to the victims' families and all tragically touched by this terrible incident.

In representing professional engineers, NSPE has long advocated in support of the important role performed by professional engineers in protecting the public health, safety, and welfare in the maritime industry. In October of 1992, the U.S. Coast Guard issued its Navigation and Inspection Circular, NVIC 10-92, in which it published its policy concerning the approval of vessel plans and design calculations which bear a professional engineer's certification of compliance with Coast Guard requirements. The Circular states, "the Coast Guard believes that plans that have been reviewed by a professional engineer (PE) or a duly authorized ABS employee prior to submittal are more likely to be in compliance with applicable regulations."

Records show that the boat in question in Branson, Missouri was designed by an entrepreneur with no prior engineering training. In addition, no structural engineers were consulted when the length of the duck boat was subsequently extended. An attorney who represents plaintiffs injured in a 2015 crash involving a similar boat said she had always assumed that building the amphibious vehicles required expertise from structural engineers.

A professional engineering license demonstrates the education, experience and qualifications perform the necessary engineering calculations and design to protect the public health, safety and welfare. Recognizing the need to support federal naval architecture and marine engineering standards, in 1995, the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) developed and approved a national examination for the professional engineering licensure of naval architecture and marine engineering.

It is NSPE's belief that licensed professional engineers with expertise in naval architecture and marine engineering would have a positive impact on the safety of marine vessels and within the marine industry. However, specific qualifications for licensure as a naval architect and marine engineer vary by state. It is NSPE's hope that state and federal agencies will seriously consider the importance of the professional engineering license for the design of boats and take appropriate action to implement the necessary changes in the law to mitigate future accidents. If NSPE

[month, day], 2018

can answer any questions or respond to any comments, please contact Arthur Schwartz, Deputy Executive Director & General Counsel, at [aschwartz@nspe.org](mailto:aschwartz@nspe.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Aitken". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Aitken" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Aitken, PE, F.NSPE

President

cc: NSPE Board of Directors