March 18, 2016

Chairman Danny Martiny  
Louisiana Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs Committee  
P.O. Box 94183  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804  

Dear Chairman Martiny,

On behalf of the more than 31,000 members of the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE), I respectfully submit the following comments in opposition to Louisiana Senate Bill No. 59 Engineers: Provides for the Qualifications of Professional Engineers. This legislation seeks to waive the fundamentals of engineering (FE) exam when 1) an applicant possesses a degree in engineering that the Board rules acceptable, 2) the applicant possesses qualifying engineering work experience, to be determined by the Board, 3) the applicant has passed the PE exam and 4) the applicant has held an active license in another state or territory within the past five years and 5) has no history of disciplinary action.

While NSPE appreciates that the committee understands the need for licensure, this legislation will, unfortunately, have the effect of weakening licensure requirements in Louisiana, and will lower standards for applicants from other states. Most important of all, the legislation, in weakening licensure requirements, threatens the public health safety, welfare as Louisianans are constantly exposed to and depend on the work of PEs (highways, bridges, water systems, industrial facilities, and flood protection systems just to name a few).

It is the policy of the National Society of Professional Engineers that, in order to earn licensure as a PE, one must 1) graduate from an ABET/EAC accredited four year-engineering program or one assessed by ABET/EAC as substantially comparable, as the base educational requirement for licensure, 2) pass the fundamentals of engineering (FE) exam and the PE exam and 3) earn four years of experience under the supervision of a licensed PE. The FE exam is the first step in the licensure process. Therefore, passage of such legislation would seriously undermine a critical foundation of professional engineering practice. These standards have served as the backbone of the profession and public safety for decades.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this comment and hope that you will consider withdrawing this legislation. Please contact Miles Williams, P.E., the Legislative Liaison Committee Chair of the Louisiana Engineering Society (LES) or Brenda Gajan, LES Executive Director, at brenda@les-state.org, with any comments, concerns, or questions.

Sincerely,

Timothy R. Austin, P.E., F.NSPE  
President  
National Society of Professional Engineers

CC: Miles Williams, P.E., Legislative Committee Chair, Louisiana Engineering Society  
Brenda Gajan, Executive Director, Louisiana Engineering Society