

NSPE Position Statement No. 04-1776 – Unified Energy Policy

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NSPE Contact: Committee on Policy and Advocacy

Professional Policy Supported: 04-Energy

Position Statement: NSPE supports a balanced approach to domestic energy development and delivery that safely, reliably, and efficiently minimizes the Nation’s reliance on foreign sources. The strategic objective of this approach is to provide reliable and cost-effective energy while protecting the public health, safety, and welfare, taking into account the full life cycle costs and environmental impacts of all energy sources. NSPE advocates for the inclusion of professional engineers in the development and execution of this approach in all engineering aspects of (1) energy production, including mining, petroleum product extraction, fuel storage, generation of electricity, and waste management; (2) energy delivery, including pipelines, ground transportation, and electric infrastructure; and (3) energy conservation and efficiency.

Background: Reliable, economic, and environmentally sustainable energy is crucial to the economic development of our Nation. Further, energy development and delivery are subject to political, economic, and technological influences. NSPE’s unified energy policy accounts for a holistic approach to energy development and delivery that advocates for the involvement of professional engineers in the evaluation and execution of a balanced approach to provide safe and cost-effective energy for generations. In executing this holistic approach, it is necessary to give appropriate consideration to all facets of energy production, energy delivery, and energy conservation and efficiency.

While the holistic development of a balanced approach to domestic energy development and delivery will require input from key stakeholders in economics, the law, politics, industry, regulation, science, environmental justice, and engineering, professional engineers must be included in such development given their licensed commitment to hold the public health, safety, and welfare foremost above all other considerations. Development of any approach absent this paramount consideration fails to include a key voice and interest necessary in this complicated endeavor.

Energy sources currently include: Coal and Lignite, Petroleum Products (including Natural Gas and other fuels); Nuclear; Biomass; Solar; Wind; Geothermal; and Hydroelectric. Energy delivery includes pipelines (transmission and distribution); railways; waterways; roadways; electric transmission lines; and electric distribution

lines. Energy conservation and efficiency, smart grid technologies and other incremental system improvements can be deployed to improve the overall development and consumption of various energy resources.