

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1900

As Passed House:
February 26, 2011

Title: An act relating to establishing continuing education requirements for engineers.

Brief Description: Establishing continuing education requirements for engineers.

Sponsors: Representatives Stanford, Ladenburg, Ryu and Green.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Business & Financial Services: 2/15/11, 2/17/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/26/11, 57-40.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires registered engineers to complete at least 15 hours of continuing professional development per year.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS & FINANCIAL SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Kirby, Chair; Kelley, Vice Chair; Blake, Hudgins, Hurst, Pedersen, Ryu and Stanford.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Parker and Rivers.

Staff: Alison Hellberg (786-7152).

Background:

Engineers must be registered in order to practice engineering in Washington. The State Board of Registration for Engineers and Land Surveyors (Board), through the Department of Licensing's Business and Professions Division, regulates the practice of engineering as well as land surveying. Candidates for registration as an engineer must have eight years of appropriate work experience and have successfully passed the required examinations.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Applicants may substitute undergraduate study in an approved engineering school or college for up to four years of the work experience requirements. The Board may also approve up to one year of appropriate postgraduate study.

The National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) is an organization composed of the professional regulatory boards of all states.

Since 2007 land surveyors renewing their registration certificates have been required to verify that they have completed 15 continuing professional development hours per year. The Board was required to adopt rules "governing continuing professional development for land surveyors that are generally patterned after the model rules" of NCEES.

Summary of Bill:

Like land surveyors, engineers are required to complete 15 hours of continuing professional development per year. The Board is required to adopt rules "governing continuing professional development for land surveyors that are generally patterned after the model rules" of NCEES. The Director of the Department of Licensing may set fees to cover the costs of administering the new requirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2012.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a straightforward bill that brings professional engineers under the same requirements as land surveyors. This issue was discussed with stakeholders over the interim and while engineers are not 100 percent supportive of this, most are supportive. Most engineers would prefer programs that include a wide range of subjects and learning formats. They would like the enforcement to be based on complaints and not routine auditing. They would also like documentation to be based on attestation and self-maintained records.

Continuing professional development is a common requirement for professions. Both architects and land surveyors already have this requirement. Engineers and land surveyors have the same regulator and the Board would be able to easily implement this.

(Opposed) This bill discriminates against those who have their professional engineers registrations who are not actively practicing professional engineering. For example, some employees are not required to be registered as a professional engineer for certain positions at the Department of Transportation. They pursue this registration to be competitive for managerial positions that require the registration. They are concerned about the financial burden on them while they wait for the opportunities to use the registration.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Stanford, prime sponsor; and Cliff Webster, Architects and Engineers Legislative Council.

(Opposed) Vince Oliveri, Professional and Technical Employees Local 17.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.