

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## EHB 1900

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection, February 23, 2012

**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:** Passed House: 2/26/11, 57-40; 1/27/12, 66-29.

**Committee Activity:** Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 2/21/12, 2/23/12 [DPA, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Conway, Vice Chair; Keiser and Kline.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Holmquist Newbry, Ranking Minority Member; King, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt.

**Staff:** Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

**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. 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

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to adopt rules governing continuing professional development for land surveyors that are generally patterned after the model rules of NCEES.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments):** 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 engineers that are generally patterned after the model rules of NCEES.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2013.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill establishes continuing education requirements for engineers that mirrors the requirements for land surveyors. It is a system we already have in place and know how it works. It is desired by the industry and a good way to make sure people are update in codes and what is happening in the field. Engineers must document 15 hours of continuing education annually. A professional engineering license brings with it a critical public responsibility because engineers have the authority to design structures that affect the public's health, safety and welfare. This bill will help Washington engineers stay competitive by putting us at par with engineers in 40 other states that currently have such requirements. Meeting a requirement of 15 hours of continuing professional development a year is not onerous; it need not be expensive. A portion of the continuing professional development can often be satisfied by self-directed study. One must look no further than the major code changes in structural and geotechnical design that have been implemented since I graduated, due to the tragedies of the World Trade Center attaches and earthquakes in Japan and New Zealand. Our profession is constantly striving to improve how we design and build. The public entrusts civil engineers with maintaining their mobility, health, and welfare in a fiscally responsible manner. It is essential that practicing engineers remain current with issues and advancements in technology in order to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare. Engineers are already required to maintain their understanding and competency within their profession, under WAC.

CON: This bill impacts all types of engineers from all of the sectors. The engineers who work for HVAC contractors work in an active status designing HVAC systems, not buildings. We get regular updates on our industry standards, especially code updates, now in a variety of formats without the arbitrary mandate of a set number of training hours. Engineers already have to pass multiple, rigorous tests to get their licenses. This is a really bad time to impose additional costs on construction. This bill will not only impose costs to attend the classes, but also the costs to keep track and submit the documents. This bill is redundant of what it already required in WAC. This bill will have a negative impact financially on engineers. This bill will require an additional cost of employment to already cash-strapped individuals and families. It will also have an impact on state and local government entities.

There has not been a real showing of a need for this bill. The industry does not want this bill. It is not clear what form of continuing education is permissible for crediting. Engineers currently have professional associations and publications that provide an unending resource for articles and presentations on current technical issues, problems, methods and achievements. Who examines the syllabus of the course work for continuing education and the effectiveness of the presenter?

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Stanford, prime sponsor; Pat Gallaoway, Pegasus Global Holdings; Ed Huston, Assn. of Collegiate Schools of Architecture; Emily Spahn, Shane Binder, American Society of Civil Engineers; James Curry, Architects & Engineers Legislative Council.

CON: Charles Pearson, WA Society of Professional Engineers PE; Kathleen Collins, Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors; Larry Stevens, Mechanical Contractors Assn., National Electrical Contractors Assn.; Terry Nettles, Structural Engineers of WA.

OTHER: Vince Oliver, PTE Local 17.