

Testimony for SB 1515

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I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 1515.

Licensed engineers have obtained a degree from an ABET-accredited engineering program and upon graduation take an 8-hour "Fundamentals of Engineer" exam. They are then required to gain experience by working under a licensed professional engineer for 4 years before they can sit for a second 8-hour exam (Principals and Practice of Engineering). Only after they successfully pass the professional engineering exam and are approved by the Professional Board are they considered competent and qualified to practice engineering and receive their license.

We currently have unlicensed, unqualified individuals engaging in the practice of professional engineering who are endangering the health, safety and welfare of the public. And this is due in large part to the fact that the penalties to discourage these acts are too lenient. The current penalty for violation of the law prohibiting the unlicensed practice of engineering is \$500 and/or up to 90 days in jail. However, the consequences of the actions of these violators could be disastrous. These individuals are putting the public safety at serious risk. This may be an individual who is designing a bridge carrying traffic, an office building full of people, or a water treatment facility that provides safe drinking water to thousands of residents.

Senate Bill 1515 will significantly increase the fines and penalties and help to curb these activities. The bill will give prosecutors the incentive to actively pursue offenders. Passage of this bill will put engineers, architects and surveyors on the same level as home builders who were recently successful in increasing fines for licensed residential builders. And most of all, passage of this bill will help to better protect the safety of the public.

Thank you.