

State News for NSPE Members

Attention: Civil Engineering and Land Surveyor Exam Applicants

To ease the transition from its legacy system to the new BPELSG Connect online portal, the state licensing board will **temporarily suspend acceptance of both initial and re-exam applications for the civil engineer and professional land surveyor licenses during the month of October 2021**. Any paper applications, initial and re-exam, for these two license types received after September 30, will be returned to the sender in its entirety.

The board anticipates beginning November 1, that all initial and re-exam applications for the civil engineer and professional land surveyor licenses will be submitted and processed online through BPELSG Connect. Applicants that have previously submitted paper applications and are currently in review within the legacy system will continue to be processed in that manner without change until such time as the applicant submits payment and a request to sit for any of the civil engineering exams or the land surveyor exam.

State Licensing Board Meeting

The California Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists will hold its next meeting **September 16-17**. Access the meeting agenda and materials [here](#).

State Lawmakers Lay the Groundwork for West Coast Offshore Wind Development

The California State Legislature passed a bill that would direct state regulators to lay the groundwork for developing wind energy resources off the West Coast, according to *Utility Dive*.

The legislation ([AB 525](#)) instructs regulators to create 2030 and 2045 goals for offshore wind, as well as a broader strategic plan for developing the resource. The legislation would require the California Energy Commission to submit a plan to

state lawmakers by June 2023.

Experts say the bill will help organize the moving pieces needed to set up the state's offshore wind sector. "This is just a new technology and it's sort of a chicken-and-egg situation—if you build it, building more will become cheaper," said Mohit Chhabra, senior scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), in the *Utility Dive* article.

The legislation comes on the heels of an effort announced by the Biden administration this year to bring online up to 4.6 GW of floating wind off the West coast. In total, the administration is looking to deploy 30 GW of offshore wind around the country by the end of the decade.

[Read more.](#)

Major California Battery Outage Highlights Energy Storage Risks

A massive US battery storage project is offline in California, stoking reliability and safety questions about a technology that will be crucial to meeting future clean electricity goals, according to *EnergyWire*.

The overheating of battery modules on Labor Day weekend affected a 300-megawatt facility at Vistra Corp.'s Moss Landing energy storage site. But the implications go beyond any one state, company, or project. That's because energy storage offers one path to help offset the intermittency of fast-growing renewable energy capacity. A reliability problem with batteries is among the factors that could hamper the Biden administration's efforts to decarbonize the US power sector by 2035, not to mention countless midcentury state and corporate clean energy goals.

Experts caution that adjustments—from battery chemistry to management systems—may be needed to ensure large battery sites can stay online, especially as their role on the grid grows. There's hope the industry will rise to the challenge, though changes come with costs.

"I do not think we should understate the importance of safety," said Kelsey Hatzell, an assistant professor at the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment at Princeton University who studies batteries. "But I am optimistic that we can engineer for safety."

[Read more.](#)



NSPE's **Job Board** is your one-stop resource for professional engineering employment. Whether you are on the hunt for your next career move or looking for today's top engineering leaders and talent, you will find it here.

The latest California jobs are pulled from the NSPE Job Board and appear on the NSPE-CA website. New career opportunities are also posted through NSPE-CA social media profiles on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#).

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Stay up to date on legislative issues through the [NSPE Advocacy Center](#).

Anti-Licensing Forces Miss the Point

Extreme anti-licensing bills have popped up in numerous states and are posing a threat to the rigorous and established professional standards followed by PEs, architects, and others who design and construct the built environment, [according to an op-ed in The Hill](#).

Lawmakers calling for these extreme measures don't differentiate between barbers and manicurists, for example, and PEs and architects, say Tom Smith, executive director of ASCE, and Michael Armstrong, CEO of NCARB. "In their absolutist free-market view, reflected in the language of their model legislation, a visit to a

barbershop or beauty salon should be treated the same as designing a bridge or water treatment plant.”

The legislative proposals range from measures that [would eliminate licensing entirely](#) to [so-called “Universal Licensing”](#) bills that would require states to accept licenses from any state regardless of whether the out-of-state license had the same level of qualifications behind it.

NSPE Calls for PE Role in AI Risk Management

To protect the public from the potential dangers of artificial intelligence applications, NSPE is calling for the involvement of licensed professional engineers in the AI development process.

NSPE’s [recommendations were submitted](#) to the National Institute of Standards and Technology in response to NIST’s request for input on an artificial intelligence risk management framework. The recommendations advocate for professional engineers or certain certified individuals to be included within the risk management framework, which covers all levels of development and implementation.

“This individual would be responsible for making decisions related to protecting the public, including those who would use or potentially be affected by an AI application,” wrote NSPE President Rick Guerra, P.E., F.NSPE. “Oversight responsibility should include having the authority to approve or reject the process, methodology, or other characteristics of the specific AI project. Having a credentialed individual to ensure these considerations are made can reduce risk that an artificial intelligence application will fail.”

Meet the 2021 Scholarship Winners

The [NSPE Education Foundation](#) recently awarded several scholarships to support talented students pursuing engineering. Meet the 2021 winners:

Markie Ash, of Waupaca, Wisconsin, is winner of the [Auxiliary Legacy Scholarship](#) and the [George B. Hightower, P.E. Fellowship](#). Ash is studying civil engineering with a structural emphasis at University of Wisconsin-Platteville. The \$2,500 auxiliary scholarship is awarded annually to a female undergraduate entering, or continuing, her junior year of a four-year ABET-accredited engineering program. The \$3,000 Hightower Fellowship is awarded annually to an engineering undergraduate or graduate student who is



enrolled in, or graduated from, an ABET-accredited engineering program.

Justin Sivasothy is this year's recipient of the [Maureen L. and Howard N. Blitman, P.E., Scholarship to Promote Diversity in Engineering](#) . The \$5,000 scholarship is awarded to a high school senior from an ethnic minority going into an ABET-accredited engineering degree program at a four-year college or university. Sivasothy, of Sugar Land, Texas, is attending the University of Texas at Austin.

The \$5,000 [Steinman Scholarship](#) has been awarded to five students studying in ABET-accredited programs this academic year. **Michael Kadus** (Chicago, Illinois) is studying industrial engineering at Purdue University. **Robert Schneider** (West Coxsackie, New York) is studying civil engineering at Clarkson University. **Annabel Sharnowski** (Novi, Michigan) is studying mechanical engineering with a minor in electrical engineering at the University of Michigan. **Noah Struck** (Alexandria, Minnesota) is studying civil engineering at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. **Jacob Witlin** (Ellicott City, Maryland) is studying fire protection at the University of Maryland.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: MICHAEL KADUS, ROBERT SCHNEIDER, ANNABEL SHARNOWSKI, NOAH STRUCK, AND JACOB WITLIN

Nominations Open for Federal Engineer of the Year Award

Honoring the commitment of federal engineers to innovation and service is the hallmark of the [Federal Engineer of the Year Award](#) . Nominations for the award, which attracts participation from more than a dozen federal agencies, are open until **October 31**.

The FEYA ceremony is scheduled for February 24, 2022, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Tickets will be available for sale in January. [Apply or nominate a worthy engineer](#) .

The 2021 Federal Engineer of the Year

Major Monica Pickenpaugh, Ph.D., P.E., of the US Air Force, was named NSPE's 2021 Federal Engineer of the Year Award winner during a [virtual awards event](#) in

February. As US Forces Korea's chief of construction, she directed \$5.7 billion of funded construction in the Republic of Korea. As part of a sharing agreement with the US, the construction program supports USFK commanders' defense efforts through critical projects.



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