

State News for NSPE Members

Montana Getting \$14 Million to Improve Electric Grid

The state is receiving \$14 million to improve the reliability and resilience of the electric grid. Funds are part of the \$125 million in grid resilience grants for states and tribal nations to modernize the electric grid announced by the US Department of Energy, [according to ABC Fox Montana](#).

State officials say grant funds will improve the reliability and resilience of the electric grid by reducing the vulnerability to disruptive events and the consequences of outages to community facilities and critical infrastructure. Money will be used to limit wildfire ignition from transmission and distribution equipment and increase the skilled workforce in Montana to operate and maintain measures.

“Our Grid Resilience Formula Grants help states and tribes modernize their electric grid to reduce impacts of climate-driven extreme weather and natural disasters while also ensuring power sector reliability. We’ve already distributed more than \$580 million throughout the US,” Kristen Nawoj, Communications Specialist with the Grid Deployment Office of the US Department of Energy said. [Read more](#).

Funding Available for Water Quality and Climate Change Projects

Montana environmental officials are making close to a million dollars in grants available for water quality projects across the state, [Montana Public Radio reports](#).

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) aims to fund projects that look to reduce pollution from land uses like agriculture and urban development near waterways. The department said this type of pollution is the single largest cause of water quality impairment in Montana.

Roughly half of the money available is reserved for projects in the lower Gallatin watershed. A stretch of the Gallatin River was designated as impaired by the US Environmental Protection Agency earlier this year after pollution created toxic algae

blooms along a 40-mile segment of the river. Information on the grant funding is available on [DEQ's website](#).

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

Workability Webinars Series to Focus on Emerging Tech

NSPE offers a live webinar series free to members—"WORKability Wednesdays"—to support members with their professional development goals. The first webinar of this season took place on September 13 - [How New PFAS Regulations Will Impact Water and Wastewater Utilities](#). A webinar on [What Utilities Want Fleets to Know About Moving to Electric Vehicles](#) will take place on September 27.



NSPE members get free access to the webinars, but must register to attend. Visit the [PE Institute](#) to review the full series line-up and to mark your calendar for these live, online events.

Registration Open: 2023 NSPE Women's Leadership Virtual Fall Symposium

Join us for these live, one-time events to hear from experts in the field and join your colleagues in important discussions organized by NSPE's Women Leadership Program Task Force: [The Cost of Leadership](#); [Leading Yourself: Learning to Increase Your Emotional Intelligence](#); and [Networking Strategies: An Unconventional Approach to Connecting with Others](#). The webinars will take place on **October 12**, **October 19**, and **October 26** at 1:00 p.m. (ET). This exclusive package is free and includes all three live, one-time sessions. The sessions will not be recorded and PDH credits will not be issued for them.

[Register now.](#)

#NSPECon23 Revisited

NSPECon23 provided an opportunity to learn and build community in the heart of Louisville, Kentucky. Find photos from the All Things Louisville reception, the first-time attendee mixer, PE Day celebrations, recognition and installation ceremonies, and more on [NSPE's Flickr account](#). Relive the fun and excitement with all your PE peers that gathered to celebrate the engineering profession.



Save the Date: NSPECon24—Raleigh, North Carolina—August 7–9



A False Solution for Our Workforce Challenges

The Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) recently posted an opinion column that highlights the risks of weakening professional licensing

requirements to address workforce challenges. NSPE is a member of ARPL.

Workforce shortages, talent pipelines at a trickle and expensive labor are all-too-familiar challenges facing businesses and the public sector. In an attempt to tackle these problems, there is a growing trend of exploring the weakening or elimination of certain key job requirements. These proposals include getting rid of college degree requirements without equivalency alternatives, doing away with requisite testing, and downgrading credentials and licensure for professionals.

To be sure, there are some elements of the occupational licensure process that require continuous improvement and elimination of impediments disparately impacting underrepresented groups. However, in the rush to address workforce challenges, legislators and other policymakers must be cautious not to create new problems that leave employers and the public at risk.

Weakening professional licensing requirements is a false solution to various workforce ills. Minimum qualifications ensured by licensing exist to protect employers and the public they serve. This is particularly important for technical professions with high public impact, such as architecture, certified public accountancy, engineering, landscape architecture and land surveying. Care must be taken to ensure that critical licensing systems for such professions, designed to ensure public and economic protection, are not compromised and swept up in broad-brush calls for occupational licensing reform. [Read more](#) .

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