

State News for NSPE Members

Montana Leads Coalition Pushing to Join Federal Climate Change Lawsuit

Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen has filed a motion for the state to intervene in a federal climate change lawsuit filed in the US District Court of Montana last year, [the Daily Montanan reports](#).

Knudsen is leading a coalition of 18 other Republican state Attorneys General, and the Territory in Guam, in filing as defendants in the lawsuit that alleges three of President Donald Trump's executive orders to "unleash" the fossil fuel industry, and remove climate protections, threaten the constitutional rights to life and liberty of the plaintiffs.

The lawsuit, filed in May, centers on 22 young plaintiffs, led by 19-year-old Eva Lighthiser, from Livingston. Lighthiser is one of several Montana plaintiffs who also filed the landmark *Held v. Montana* lawsuit, alleging several state policies violated their constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment. The *Held* case prevailed in Montana District Court and, in late 2024, the Montana Supreme Court.

Lighthiser says the president is "waging war" on her and her co-plaintiffs, and that the federal government's actions amount to a "death sentence for my generation."

"President Trump's (executive orders)s falsely claim an energy emergency, while the true emergency is that fossil fuel pollution is destroying the foundation of Plaintiffs' lives," according to the 126-page complaint. "These unconstitutional directives have the immediate effect of slowing the buildout of US energy infrastructure that eliminates planet-heating fossil fuel greenhouse gas pollution ... and increasing the use of fossil fuels that pollute the air, water, lands, and climate on which Plaintiffs' lives depend." [Read more](#).

Montana State Graduate Students See Carbon Fiber Reshaping Flying Transportation

Two graduate students at Montana State University recently gave presentations at an international conference on a unique carbon fiber composite that could one day reduce manufacturing and operational costs of airplanes, helicopters and other flying forms of transportation by making them significantly lighter without compromising their strength, [Montana State University reports](#).

Yoni Shchemelinin, a mechanical engineering doctoral student, and Cooper Williams, a mechanical engineering master's student, both in the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering in MSU's Norm Asbjornson College of Engineering, gave their presentations in May on stretch broken carbon fiber, or SBCF, at the Vertical Flight Society's Annual Forum and Technology Display held in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Shchemelinin and Williams each work with SBCF, a composite that's as strong as steel but six times lighter. The work at MSU is supported by \$35 million in contracts from the US Army and other sources. The SBCF research team includes 15 faculty and staff, 10 graduate students and three undergraduates. The research they're undertaking has been ongoing since 2018. [Read more](#).

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

NSPE Garners Victory for Tomorrow's Workforce

On July 4, 2025, the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act was signed into law as part of the larger One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The new law expands 529 education savings plans to cover expenses related to licensure, certification, and other postsecondary credentials.

As written, the legislation covers programs accredited by organizations such as the National Commission on Certifying Agencies (NCCA) or the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), as well as tuition, required materials, and testing fees. These changes will provide more flexible financial tools to support individuals working toward credentials in highly technical fields, including engineering, where continued education and professional development are essential.

This marks a major win for NSPE and the many members who engaged over the years to make it happen. Implementation guidance is expected in the coming months, and NSPE will share updates as federal agencies roll out the new provisions. [Read more](#).

NSPE Backs Increased Mobility Through International Licensure Agreements

NSPE recently [issued a position statement](#) to express support for and encourage mobility of engineering licensure among US states, territories, and foreign countries as long as public safety, health and welfare is maintained.

To provide mobility with foreign countries, Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) between the National Council of Examiners for Engineers (NCEES) and their foreign equivalent should be encouraged, so long as the methods of establishing licensure in the two countries have been deemed equivalent in rigorousness. State boards are encouraged to adopt regulations to allow international comity, understanding individual states may continue to have requirements unique to engineering in those states.

NCEES and the Engineers Council of the United Kingdom [signed an MRA in April 2024](#) and 26 state boards agreed to consider adopting regulations to implement the MRA by signing on to it at the NCEES Annual Meeting in August 2024. The MRA builds on efforts by both organizations through the International Engineering Alliance and International Professional Engineers Agreement.

Professional Liability Trends Every Design Professional Should Know

Each year, NSPE, the American Institute of Architects, and the American Council of Engineering Companies join forces to conduct the annual [Professional Liability Insurance Carriers Survey](#) to provide highlight trends, coverage options, and risk management practices across the industry. Learn what's changing in professional liability and what it means for your firm in 2025 in a [new article](#).

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