

State News for NSPE Members

Salt Water Threatens South Louisiana Drinking Water

As the Mississippi River drops to one of its lowest levels in recent history, the US Army Corps of Engineers said salt water from the Gulf of Mexico could threaten drinking water as far north as New Orleans' French Quarter if no action is taken, [New Orleans Public Radio reports](#).

The Corps announced plans to avoid that scenario by building upon an existing underwater barrier that has been in place to block the progression of salt water from intruding farther upriver since July. At its current height, the Corps expects the salt water creeping up the bottom of the Mississippi River to overtop the barrier later this week, sometime around September 22.

If that were to happen, the salt water would begin affecting drinking water in Belle Chasse by early October.

A pervasive drought throughout the Mississippi River Valley allowed seawater to encroach inland earlier this summer. By June, the residents living in lower Plaquemines Parish were forced to go without fresh drinking water and have been relying on water distributed by the parish.

Currently, Plaquemines Parish President W. Keith Hinkley said about 2,000 residents can't drink their water due to salt contamination, and the parish has distributed more than 1.5 million gallons of water with little signs of reprieve. If the salt water reaches Belle Chasse, at least 20,000 more residents would be affected. [Read more](#).

Renewable Power Expected to Grow in Louisiana

Louisiana will soon mark the seventh annual National Clean Energy Week. While the state's renewable power industry is slightly behind that of most other states, it is forecast to accelerate significantly over the coming years, the [Louisiana Illuminator reports](#).

According to a press release, Governor John Bel Edwards issued a proclamation declaring September 25-29 as Clean Energy Week in Louisiana in conjunction with the national celebration. By most statistical categories, the celebration is warranted. Clean energy, or more specifically, renewable energy, has exploded in growth across the United States.

In its category of “clean energy,” the National Clean Energy Week organization includes natural gas, hydrogen, biomass, and propane even though those sources emit greenhouse gases and rely mostly on finite resources. “Renewable energy,” on the other hand, is more narrowly limited to solar, wind, hydropower, and geothermal energy, which emit no pollution and rely on resources that are virtually infinite, like sunlight.

Solar energy has seen huge expansions nationwide, according to the Solar Energy Industry Association. Utility-scale solar installations have increased 15-fold since 2013 in terms of generation capacity, from 6,626 megawatts to 98,907 megawatts in 2023. Residential installations have also increased at a similar rate, from 2,233 megawatts 10 years ago to 32,749 megawatts this year.

The solar industry workforce has grown roughly 85% over the last decade with more than 263,000 Americans employed at more than 10,000 companies across every state, according to the SEIA. [Read more.](#)

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](#) .

You received this e-mail because you are subscribed to *PE Matters* e-newsletter.

To update your e-mail address, visit www.nspe.org and login to manage your account.

If you do not wish to receive any more issues of *PE Matters*, [click here](#) to unsubscribe .

Share with your network



**National Society of Professional Engineers | 1420 King Street | Alexandria, VA
22314**