

State News for NSPE Members

Legal Protections for Companies That Mine Phosphate Move in First Committee

A bill that would provide new legal protections to companies that mine phosphate in Florida and leave behind radioactive spoils buried underneath the ground won unanimous approval during its first committee stop in the Florida Legislature, [according to the Florida Phoenix](#).

The measure (SB 832), sponsored by Tampa Bay Republican Danny Burgess, establishes a defense for phosphate companies from the legal concept of “strict liability” in lawsuits related to pollution on the site of a former phosphate mine.

Strict liability is a concept applied in both civil and criminal law that holds a defendant responsible for their actions regardless of their intent. If this bill were to pass, a plaintiff would have to prove that the phosphate company was negligent to prevail in the action.

Burgess introduced the proposal before the Senate Judiciary Committee by defining it as “incredibly narrowly tailored” compared to a measure he sponsored a year ago that would have restricted lawsuits in pollution cases.

“What it will do is require if a landowner of a former phosphate mine has provided a certain notice and also has conducted a gamma radiation survey then they in fact have a defense against a strict liability claim,” he said. [Read more](#).

Manatee County Port Authority Awarded \$2M for Infrastructure Improvements

Governor Ron DeSantis awarded \$2 million to the Manatee County Port Authority through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund (JGGF) for infrastructure improvements at SeaPort Manatee, [the Florida Department of Transportation reports](#).

This investment will fund the reconstruction and repaving of key roadways, including South Dock Street, as well as critical stormwater mitigation improvements. These enhancements will also strengthen port resiliency, support economic growth, and aid the region's recovery from the economic impacts of the 2024 hurricane season.

"Seaports are the backbone of Florida's supply chain and with the growth at SeaPort Manatee, infrastructure investments are critically needed," said FDOT Secretary Jared W. Perdue, P.E. "I'm grateful for Governor DeSantis and FloridaCommerce for this Florida Job Growth Grant Fund that will allow even more goods to reach communities across the state."

This funding will enhance infrastructure to meet the growing demands of both existing and new businesses as they expand operations and create jobs. The project is expected to generate 300 jobs while improving port efficiency and supporting an expansion for home, aerospace, and automotive products manufacturer Honeywell. [Read More](#).

Florida Researchers Work to Strengthen Cyber Infrastructure in War-Torn Nation

As the world marks the third anniversary of the conflict in Ukraine, a team of University of Florida researchers is working to secure vulnerable cyber-physical networks in the war-torn nation, [UF News reports](#).

Rafael Muñoz-Carpena, Ph.D., a distinguished professor with Agricultural and Biological Engineering, is leading the NATO-funded project "Pathways for Infrastructure Resilience in Ukraine." It is creating advanced methodologies to model, test and improve network robustness against cyber-attacks, geopolitical conflicts and natural disasters.

"We are not cyber-physical engineers in the classical sense," Muñoz-Carpena said. "We are biological engineers, and we draw from biological systems to analyze behavior, rules and dynamics that we can apply to other systems."

In this case, the focus is on recovery, not just from human-led cyberattacks but also natural disasters that knock Ukraine's infrastructure offline.

Using national infrastructure data and artificial intelligence models, the project identifies factors to improve system downtime and recovery, Muñoz-Carpena's noted. The full initiative is designed to foster international collaborations, train scientists, ensure sustainability and provide stakeholders practical resilience tools. [Read more](#).

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

2025 Spring Webinar Series Kicks Off

NSPE offers a live webinar series free to members—“WORKability Wednesdays”—to support their professional development goals. The season launched with the webinar—[Board of Ethical Review: Case Review and Discussion](#)—on March 12.



The series will include the following webinars:

March 26: [My Way or the Highway? The Impact: Designing Flexible and Future-Ready RTO Policies That Work](#)

April 9: [Trust Matters: Empowering Leaders to Foster Team Trust and Performance](#)

May 14: [Using Your Engineering Expertise as a Forensic Expert](#)

May 28: [How Has Technology Shaped Workstyles Across Generations?](#)

Register now at [NSPE's PE Institute](#) and invite a colleague to attend. An additional presentation will take place on April 23 – save the date and stay tuned for details.

*Members are advised to consult their [state licensing board](#) to determine requirements for PDH or CPD credits.



The 2025 Scholarship Season Opens

The NSPE Education Foundation is now accepting applications for the 2025 scholarship season through an [online submission platform](#). The **application deadline is April 15** for the Steinman Scholarship, the Auxiliary Legacy Scholarship, and the George B. Hightower, P.E. Fellowship.

[Steinman Scholarship](#)

The \$5,000 scholarship is awarded annually to undergraduates entering or

continuing their junior year in a four-year ABET-accredited engineering program.

[Auxiliary Legacy Scholarship](#)

This scholarship is awarded annually to a female undergraduate entering or continuing their junior year of a four-year ABET-accredited engineering program.

[George B. Hightower, P.E., Fellowship](#)

The \$3,000 award is designated for a current engineering undergraduate or graduate student who is enrolled in, or graduated from, an ABET-accredited engineering program.

[Submit Your Application](#)

NCEES Seeks the Expertise of Control Systems Engineers

NCEES is currently seeking licensed control systems engineers to participate in a professional activities and knowledge study, or PAKS, for the PE Control Systems exam. The results of this online survey will be used to update specifications for the exam, which is used throughout the US for licensing purposes.

NCEES requires a cross section of licensed professional engineers practicing control systems engineering—including those working in industry, consulting, the public sector, and academia—to complete an online survey about the tasks and knowledge required of a licensed control systems engineer with four to six years of experience to practice in a manner that safeguards the health, safety, and welfare of the public. The survey can be completed in approximately 30–40 minutes.

“These studies help NCEES ensure its licensing exams remain relevant to current professional practice,” explained Chief Officer of Examinations J. Lehmon Dekle, P.E. “The value of this PAKS depends on the number of people who participate, so NCEES is eager to get a large response from professional engineers across all areas of control systems engineering.”

Access the online survey [here](#). The survey is open until May 22.

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