

State News for NSPE Members

Florida Roads Would Benefit from Per-Mile Gasoline Charges

Florida's road network depends heavily on per-gallon taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel, but a new [policy brief](#) from the Tallahassee-based James Madison Institute recommends a gradual transition to a per-mile charging system. The brief suggests starting the transition with the state's limited-access highways followed by state and local roads.

The state should also carry out a serious study of the need for modernizing the limited-access system and seek to join the latest phase of the [I-95 Corridor Coalition's](#) mileage-based user fee pilot project. "The first two phases have involved the state DOTs of Delaware, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, with participation from motorists and trucking companies," the brief says. "Florida was conspicuous by its absence."

A new [report](#) from the Mineta Transportation Institute found that nearly half of all Americans support a mileage fee and that 75% of Americans support a gas tax increase if the money is used on maintenance projects.

Educating 'New Engineers'

Sarasota-based The New College of Florida and the University of Florida are partnering on a double-degree program that will produce "new engineers," reports the [Tampa Bay Business Journal](#). In the five-year program, students will be able to receive a degree in liberal arts and science from New College and a bachelor of science degree in engineering from the University of Florida. Officials are aiming to open the program in the spring 2021 semester.

How to Ensure Successful Stakeholder and Community

Involvement

NSPE-FL member Nicholas Albergo, P.E., will be presenting the webinar “Ensuring Successful Stakeholder and Community Involvement” at NSPE’s 2020 [Virtual Professional Engineers Conference](#). Nick is the founder of HSA Engineers & Scientists. He has spent decades working with industry stakeholders and governmental officials on hundreds of contamination assessment and remediation projects. He is often called upon as an expert witness in litigation matters involving contaminant impact and cleanup.



We Want to Hear from You!

Do you know of engineering news in Florida that would be great for this newsletter? Maybe it’s a project you or your firm is working on, or perhaps you read some interesting engineering news in your local newspaper. Or maybe you know of a fellow PE or student who deserves a little recognition. If so, we want to hear from you. Email your ideas to pemagazine@nspe.org.

NSPE Urges Veto of Structural Engineering Bill

In a letter to Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, NSPE encouraged the veto of a bill to establish a separate licensing system for structural engineers.

President-Elect Tricia Hatley, P.E., F.NSPE, wrote that creating a new licensing system for structural engineering does not improve the public health, safety, or welfare. “Instead, it muddies the water, creating confusion and requiring regulatory authorities to make arbitrary distinctions to define structural engineering,” she added. “Rather than reducing regulatory burdens, the change would add a new layer, requiring one engineer to obtain multiple licenses in order to do work that, previously, required only one.”

Instead of creating a separate licensing system, NSPE recommends a certification

process that occurs after the professional engineering license has already been obtained. “This system would allow for the SE designation, if required or requested by potential employers or RFPs, without drawing the same, hard line between structural and other types of engineering,” Hatley wrote.

[Read the full letter.](#)

Take Action on Federal Infrastructure Bills

You have an important opportunity to add your voice to the debate around pending infrastructure legislation.

The first two bills are the House and Senate’s surface transportation infrastructure reauthorization bills—The INVEST in America Act ([H.R. 2](#)) and the America’s Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019 ([S. 2302](#)). This is an opportunity to communicate to members of Congress the importance and value of having PEs involved in engineering decisions to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

[Take action on surface transportation reauthorization!](#)

The third bill, the SMART Infrastructure Act ([H.R. 4687](#)), would take decision-making authority away from professional engineers and instead give it to state and local authorities, allowing them to select “appropriate” construction materials. The bill would establish that these entities would have the flexibility to select appropriate construction materials that meet the performance requirements of the contract and enhance the service life, sustainability, and resiliency of the project.

NSPE opposes this bill because its enactment would prevent PEs from making the final decision on the appropriate construction materials for a project. Additionally, it establishes a federal interagency task force charged with deciding whether state and local procurement practices have artificial barriers to competition for new and innovative materials and recommending actions that can be taken to remove barriers. Their decisions could put the public at risk should these new and innovative materials present unforeseen harms to the public.

[Voice your opposition to H.R. 4687!](#)

Celebrate PE Day!

NSPE is celebrating licensed professional engineers with the [fifth annual Professional Engineers Day](#) on Wednesday, **August 5**. Join the Society in raising awareness about what it means to be a PE and

showing appreciation for the work they do every day.

In lieu of in-district meetings with legislators, like those conducted last year, NSPE members will be able to participate in a series of panel discussions. The discussions will include members of Congress and/or their staff, who will share information on pending legislation that impacts the engineering profession. NSPE members will have opportunities to ask questions and to take action on the bills that are discussed by the panel.

PE Day falls within the week of the Virtual **PECon** (August 3–7). As a highlight of PE Day, NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt III, will discuss [“The Role and Responsibility of Professional Engineers in Ensuring Safety of Our Nation’s Infrastructure.”](#) His presentation will touch on the NTSB’s recommendation for eliminating the PE license exemption for public utility work, and the requirement for a professional engineer’s seal on public utility engineering drawings, stemming from the tragic pipeline explosions and fires in the Merrimack Valley of Massachusetts.

IBM’s Global Chief Technology Officer Ben Amaba, is also featured as a keynote speaker and will cover the [professional engineer’s role](#) in artificial intelligence and technology.

[Register for the Virtual PECon.](#)



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