

State News for NSPE Members

New, Tougher Concrete Expected to Expand Lifespan of DC Bridge

Ultra-high-performance concrete reinforced with fine sand and steel fibers will be applied to the Southern Avenue Bridge over the Suitland Parkway in Southeast. It's the first time ultra-high-performance concrete is being used in the District, [NBC Washington reports](#).

"It gives us a coating for our bridges that provides protection that is so much stronger than anything we've been using," DC Department of Transportation Deputy Director Sharon Kershbaum said. Normal concrete gets about 15-20 years of life, according to the Federal Highway Administration. This new concrete is expected to last more than 70 years.

Kershbaum said it can take a beating. "So, our regular concrete, it would withstand 4,500 PSIs, so pounds per square inch of pressure," she said. "This new material would withstand 12,000 PSIs."

The new concrete isn't cheap. DDOT received a \$1 million grant from the federal government to try it. If the agency likes what it sees, the ultra-high-performance concrete could be used on some of DC's 200 other bridges. The material cuts down on the number of times roads have to be closed for repairs, which helps the environment by keeping traffic flowing and not sitting in delays. [Read more](#).

Dominion Energy to Construct Largest US Airport Solar Farm at Dulles

Dominion Energy has reached an agreement with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) to build the largest airport solar farm in the United States. The solar farm will be located at Dulles International Airport, one of the airports serving the Washington, DC area. Construction is set to begin later this year, and the project aims to have all 200,000 solar panels installed and operational by 2026, [Energyportal.eu reports](#).

The 100 MW solar farm will also feature 50 MW of battery storage and will occupy 835 acres of land owned by MWAA. Dominion Energy will construct two additional 1 MW rooftop solar systems that will cover carports at Dulles International. The electricity generated by these solar carports will partially power the airport facilities. The project also includes the installation of electric vehicle charging stations, as well as the introduction of 18 electric transit buses and 50 electric fleet vehicles. [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](#) .

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