

## State News for NSPE Members

### DC Reaches \$57 Million Settlement with Pepco Over Waste

Electric company Pepco has agreed to pay \$57 million to settle claims that it discharged toxic chemicals into the District's Anacostia River for decades, [Bloomberg Law reports](#).

The money will be split between clean-up costs, remediation of two contaminated sites, and damages, according to a consent decree filed in the US District Court for the District of Columbia. This is the biggest environmental settlement in the district's history, according to the attorney general's office.

DC Attorney General Brian Schwalb called the announcement a "critical step" toward making the Anacostia swimmable again. "The settlement we're announcing today is paving the way" for all the work that still needs to be done, Schwalb said.

The district said in its complaint filed the same day that Potomac Electric Power Co., known as Pepco, polluted the river by releasing polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs, "petroleum, and other hazardous substances from spills and leaking equipment at or from" the company's Benning Road Site.

Some of the substances "take decades to break down, so they have remained in the River long after their release, causing long lasting harmful effects to human health, the environment, and the District's economy," the complaint says.

Under the terms of the agreement, Pepco must pay \$47 million to fund the district's initial river cleanup, as well as an additional \$10 million in civil penalties. [Read more](#).

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### WMATA HQ Achieves LEED Platinum Certification

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority's (WMATA) headquarters at L'Enfant Plaza has been certified as LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum by the US Green Building Council, the highest certification achievable in the LEED program, [Mass Transit Magazine](#)

[reports.](#)

The building design and construction were both certified under LEED® Version 4, stringent requirements for energy reduction and material selection. WMATA's headquarters is one of only two Version 4 projects to have received the certification in Washington, DC, and one of only 13 projects to receive LEED® Platinum certification for Building Design and Construction in the District, all versions considered. The building received a perfect score of 100 on the ENERGY STAR scale. This perfect score contributed towards the overall certification process.

“Sustainability and talented teams are two of WMATA’s pillars in the strategic transformation plan,” said WMATA General Manager and CEO Randy Clarke. “This certification shows our new headquarters will deliver benefits for the environment and employees for decades to come.” [Read more.](#)

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

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## Looking Toward a Promising Future

*By Bill Atkinson, P.E., F.NSPE, President 2023–24*



As I continue on my professional journey as the NSPE president, I often reflect on what our organization has done since its founding in 1934 and what NSPE needs to do going forward. The next stage of NSPE’s future begins with our vision to ensure that the public lives in a world where engineering decisions are made by qualified and ethically accountable professionals. This will require that a unified engineering community step up to protect licensure laws across the nation and maintain high standards for professional practice. It will require that we embrace innovation and emerging technologies. This future will be bolstered by a new generation of engineers that we must encourage to understand that they can truly make a difference in the world. I look forward to playing my part and supporting others in these efforts.

### Licensure and Emerging Technologies

Protection of the public health, safety, and welfare is at our core as professional engineers. Licensure is key to ensuring consistent standards of practice and professional competencies. We must make sure that these standards and competencies remain relevant to how we do things today, while looking toward the future.

We must continually question ourselves and the regulations that are in place. Are state licensing laws adequately regulating the profession of engineering without precluding otherwise qualified individuals from practicing? Is our current licensure model adequately serving its purpose? Are engineering licensure exemptions creating gaps where the public could be harmed? The answers to these questions can help drive us to better ways of safeguarding the public.

I believe that most individuals that become engineers do so because they are good at making things better. They are not tied to the world they are in today and are always pursuing excellence and improvement. I believe that by pooling our experiences as engineers, we can bring the best and brightest together to tackle any challenge that we may face as we seek to evolve. This evolution will involve the development and use of emerging technologies to spur innovative solutions. NSPE is supporting members by providing professional development that showcases the use of these technologies in a manner that is ethical and will benefit the public. [Read more.](#)

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## **NSPECon24 – Call for Presentation Proposals**

Prepare to share your expertise during NSPECon24 in Raleigh, North Carolina, August 7-9, 2024. [Review the topics](#) NSPE seeks in the areas of career development, leadership, and issues and trends, and think about how you can contribute. The submission site will open on November 1 and the proposal deadline is **January 10, 2024**.

The [NSPECon23 program](#) is still available online and may give potential presenters some ideas about the caliber of sessions needed for next year.

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## **Volunteers are the Heart of NSPE: Get Involved and Share Your Voice**



Volunteers are essential to advancing NSPE's vision to ensure a world where the public can be confident that engineering decisions affecting their lives are made by qualified and ethically accountable professionals. Volunteering is also a great opportunity for members to grow their professional network and connect with other leaders in the field.

There are [several ways to get involved](#)...here a few opportunities to consider

**Serve as a mentor for an engineering student.** If interested, send an email to [education@nspe.org](mailto:education@nspe.org).

**NSPE online community champion.** Virtual opportunity to promote community and sharing of ideas through NSPE's online channels. If interested, send an email to [membership@nspe.org](mailto:membership@nspe.org).

**Write an article for *PE* magazine.** Share your expertise and insights on professional practice, education, ethics, leadership, licensure, public policy, DEI, emerging technologies, and sustainability and resilience by serving as a guest writer for *PE* magazine. If interested, email [pemagazine@nspe.org](mailto:pemagazine@nspe.org) for submission guidelines.

**Collaborate with staff to draft/supply input** on federal legislation, regulations or public comments to federal Congressional staff and committees (Identify your area(s) of vocational expertise.) If interested, send an email to [governmentrelations@nspe.org](mailto:governmentrelations@nspe.org).

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