

State News for NSPE Members

Solar Farm Construction Harms Tree Species

Oak trees, a keystone species in the state, have been on a rapid decline due to an onslaught of gypsy moths from 2016–19, drought, and most recently, deforestation for the purpose of building solar farms. Commercial solar advocates argue that the farms are significantly beneficial to the environment, while others argue solar farms don't help to manage watersheds as trees do, [Eco RI News reports](#). Instead of building solar arrays on disturbed sites such as landfills, however, many solar developers see cost savings in converting forests and farmland.

"I know we want renewable energy, but we've got enough land that has already been leveled. Put the solar arrays on rooftops. Put them on all the destroyed properties we already have," an entomology professor said. "Don't cut down existing forests. It's totally antithetical to the goals of conservation."

Battery Storage Project Aims to Help State Reach Energy Goals

Energy developer [Agilitas Energy](#) is starting preconstruction work on its latest [battery energy storage project](#), a 3 MW / 9 MWh lithium-ion system in Pascoag. The storage system will allow the utility to modernize while avoiding the costly rebuilding of power lines.

Last year, then Governor Gina Raimondo signed an executive order committing Rhode Island to meet 100% of its electricity demand with renewables and nonfossil fuel resources by 2030. Energy storage systems will play a significant role in this by storing energy generated by renewables for later use.

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

Register for the 2021 Virtual PECon

Registration is now open for NSPE's [Virtual Professional Engineers Conference 2021](#) (August 3–5). The [early bird registration](#) rate deadline is **July 15**.

Attendees will have access to up to 14 unique and insightful PDH sessions (live and on-demand sessions) and will have the opportunity to collaborate with peers and experts from across the country through morning “coffee chats” and Mastermind sessions. In the Mastermind sessions, attendees will address their most pressing professional issues and tap into the knowledge, experience, and advice of their peers and PE experts to help workshop solutions. There will also be virtual engineering facility tours and a celebration of [PE Day](#) (August 4).



PECon at a Glance

- [Bridging the Gap to Leadership: Connecting the Skills You Have with the Skills You Need](#) (Shelley Row, P.E., CSP, Leadership and Decision-Making Expert)
- [Florida International University Bridge Failure, A Study in Ethics](#) (Susan Sprague, P.E., F.NSPE, Senior Associate, and Eric Tappert, P.E., Consultant)
- [AI and the Evolving Role of the “Traditional” Engineer: An Engineer’s Perspective from NASA to Infrastructure and Beyond](#) (Kimberly Johnson, P.E., Founding Principal)
- [Reaching New Heights in Engineering](#) (Alan Mallory, P.E., PMP, Speaker, Author, and Performance Coach)

Registration Options

A **Day Pass** for NSPE members is \$99 until July 15 and \$149 after July 15. The pass provides access to four PDH sessions, networking morning “coffee chat” roundtables of your choice each day, and evening post-session discussions.

The **All Access Pass** for NSPE members is \$249 until July 15 and \$299 after July 15. This pass provides access to 14 PDH sessions, access to daily networking morning “coffee chat” roundtables, and evening post session discussions.

Student members can register for a Day Pass or the All Access Pass for free until July 15. The rate for both passes is \$50 after July 15. Nonmembers can join NSPE for \$299 and receive member pricing.

Women in Engineering Event to Explore Gender and Racial Equity

DiscoverE and the Congressional Women in STEM Caucus will co-host an event on **June 23**, in celebration of [International Women in Engineering Day](#). The event will include a lively panel discussion exploring the factors that attract girls to engineering, why women persist in the field, and the role you can play in achieving gender and racial equity in engineering and technology.

NSPE Government Relations staff coordinated the participation of the Women in STEM Caucus for the event. The Women in STEM Caucus seeks to bring public and congressional awareness to policies, programs, and initiatives that support women in STEM fields, and develops the next generation of women leaders. Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), Rep. Debbie Lesko (R-AZ), Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI), and Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-IN) serve as caucus co-chairs.

NSPE [recognizes](#) the benefits of a diverse population of licensed engineers in shaping the future of engineering. Diverse backgrounds foster unique contributions and capabilities and create an inclusive community ultimately leading to a more creative, effective and technically respected community.

[Register here.](#)

2021–22 Call for Volunteers

NSPE needs your knowledge, expertise, and time to help the Society carry out its [vision and mission and meet the goals of the strategic plan](#). Volunteer positions begin in mid-August and end at the 2022 Professional Engineers Conference.

There are three types of volunteer opportunities:

- **Level 1 (Highest Engagement)–Standing Boards and Committees**
Often includes attending at least one in-person meeting. Most meetings held via video conference. Terms may be up to three years.
- **Level 2 (Intermediate Engagement)–Ad Hoc Committees and Task Forces**
Activities primarily include online correspondence and video conference

meetings.

- **Level 3 (Lowest Engagement)–Ad Hoc Volunteer**
Volunteer on a project-by-project basis.

[Submit forms by July 9 to be considered for a 2021-22 term.](#)

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