

Senate Committee on Government Operations
State House
Montpelier



March 6, 2020

RE: S.220 – An act relating to educating specified professionals on the State’s energy goals

Dear Committee,

The Vermont Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE Vermont Section) represents over 400 engineers who live and work in Vermont. We are writing today to express some concerns with S. 220, legislation that would require engineers in Vermont to include 2-hours of specific continuing education on state energy goals, as part of the process to be a licensed Professional Engineer in Vermont. Currently Vermont Engineers are required to document 30 hours of continuing education relevant to their field and methods of engineering practice for each 2-year relicensing period without specified content. While we support efforts to enhance Vermont’s energy plan, we request that the legislation make certain clarifications if it is considered by the Senate. Additionally, currently the only content that states mandate to fulfill continuing education requirements is a course on ethics, therefore, the Vermont legislature is entering a unique area by mandating certain sector specific course work. If Vermont does choose to move past a requirement in statute that energy guidelines are adhered to, and instead legislate on education requirements, the ASCE Vermont section wants to ensure that any new mandates are clear.

ASCE endorses, supports and promotes the professional licensure of engineers with appropriate standards for education, experience, examination, continuing professional development, and professional conduct to protect and enhance the health, safety and welfare of the public. Therefore, ASCE is committed to effective licensure and guaranteeing that those practicing civil engineering attain and maintain the increasing body of technical knowledge needed to make decisions and recommendations that impact public safety.

Additionally, the ASCE Vermont section is committed to the state’s energy goals. In the [2019 Report Card for Vermont’s Infrastructure](#), the ASCE Vermont Section evaluated the state’s energy infrastructure as a “B-,” compared to the national energy grade at a “D+.” Our report highlighted many of Vermont’s energy goals as positively contributing to this nationally high energy infrastructure grade and identified multiple recommendations which would be bolstered by the education requirements mandated in S. 220.

Therefore, the ASCE Vermont Section requests that the legislation:

1. Clarifies that any mandatory energy education for Professional Engineers qualifies as part of the 30 hours of continuing education that Vermont engineers must achieve every 2-year relicensing period; and
2. Recognizes a successful program must be tailored for the needs of each profession outlined. Design professionals, such as engineers should be able to apply design and

implementation training that would support energy goals. As currently written, S. 220 takes a catch-all approach for a wide variety of professions where backgrounds and existing knowledge is extremely varied. Continuing education requirements for design professionals like engineers should not be the same as requirements for installation and maintenance technicians.

The ASCE Vermont Section stands ready to work with you as the state moves forward with policy solutions to ensure Vermont maintains a strong energy sector and we thank you for considering our viewpoints as you review S. 220.

Sincerely,

Jessica C. Louisos, MS, PE
Past-President and Government Relations Chair
Vermont Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers
jlouisos@mminc.com