

Separate SE Licensing Summit
Moving Forward
Washington's Experience

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First Attempt

An Ad Hoc Committee for Scope of Practice for Structural Engineers was convened by the Washington Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors in 1993



First Attempt

Ad Hoc Committee Makeup - 17 Members

Two Structural Members of the Board

One Civil Member of the Board

Executive Director of the Board

Registered Structural Engineers

Registered Civil Engineers – Structural

Registered Civil Engineers – Non Structural

Washington DOT

Building Officials

Engineers from both sides of the Cascades



First Attempt

Washington examines and registers engineers by discipline, - mechanical engineering, civil engineering, structural engineering

RCW 18.43 permitted any registered engineer to practice in any discipline, including structural engineering, provided that the registrant has attained sufficient experience and competence in that field



First Attempt

Public agencies, such as WashDOT limited the practice of structural engineering to registered structural engineers

Some building departments limited the practice of structural engineering on some projects to registered structural engineers

This created an inconsistent set of regulations



First Attempt

The Ad Hoc Committee met several times.

They discussed:

- Reasons for limiting practice to SE's
- Which structures should require an SE
- Partners and Opponents
- Communication and Implementation
- Grandparenting



First Attempt - Grandparenting

- It's vital
- Currently and continuously licensed for 10 years
- Documented competent experience with the range of structures requiring an SE
- Not currently under Board sanction
- Six month window after implementation



First Attempt - The minority report

- It should be all structures
- Grandparenting is a threat to public safety
- If we are going to register by discipline, it should be all branches of engineering
- Let the Building Officials do it
- (One of the structural members of the Board thought the Civil member of the Board was trying to get himself an SE license)



Second Attempt

- Robert Bourdages, Chair of the SEAW Legislative Committee was the champion for the second attempt.
- He worked with the lobbyist for the Architect's and Engineer's Legislative Council (AELC) to draft a bill and submit it.
- There were substantial comments from SEAW members!!!
- Members east of the cascades in a lower seismic and wind zone characterized the new bill as protectionist, elitist, and unnecessary.
- Others didn't want ANY grandparenting.



Second Attempt

- Three other separate licensure bills were submitted in the same cycle (interior designers, landscape architects and building designers).
- Our lobbyist suggested we pull our bill as it could be linked to the other bills and be defeated (the building designer bill was going to be hotly contested by AIA)
- This gave us a year to address the significant concerns from our own members. We also took it to ASCE Seattle Section and started a dialogue with them.



Third Attempt

- Robert Bourdages was the champion for the third attempt. He had (some) assistance from Peter Hart, Ade Bright and Ed Huston
- The Washington Board of Registration “tweaked” it regarding grandparenting.
- SEAW members listed above testified before the house and senate committees and used blast emails to get SEAW Members to call their legislators.
- WashDOT was in opposition in the first hearing. We addressed their concerns and they were silent thereafter.



Third Attempt

- The bill passed the Senate on 3/16/08 by a vote of 36 to 11.
- The bill passed the house on 4/10/07 by a vote of 98-0-0-0
- The Governor signed the bill on April 21, 2007
- The law took effect July 1, 2008





Gov. Chris Gregoire signs SB 5984. 20070421-4081 WASENATE db

After Passage - Grandparenting

- The bill stated: An engineer must be registered as a structural engineer in order to provide structural engineering services for significant structures.
- The board may waive the requirements of this subsection until December 31, 2010, if:
 - On January 1, 2007, the engineer is registered with the board as a professional engineer; and
 - Within two years of January 1, 2007, the engineer demonstrates to the satisfaction of the board that the engineer has sufficient experience in the duties typically provided by a professional structural engineer regarding significant structures.



After Passage - Grandparenting

- The board was going to initially grant indefinite structural waivers liberally, but WashDot again protested.
- The board held two public hearings and took a “by the book” approach that the waivers expired on 1/1/11.
- The hearings brought up very interesting questions about what is a “structure”
 - Dams? Cell Towers? Other towers? Water tanks?

