



## Efforts toward SE Licensure

By Susan Jorgensen, P.E., SECB, LEED

Structural Licensure Committee. Structural Engineers Certification Board. Structural Engineering Licensure Coalition. What are these groups? How are they connected? What do they do? Why is it important?

Since its inception, one of the primary goals of the National Council of Structural Engineers Associations (NCSEA) is advocating and supporting structural engineering licensure in each jurisdiction. To work toward achieving this goal, NCSEA created a Structural Licensure Committee to gather information, develop supporting material, and assist state committees working with their licensing boards and legislatures to implement structural engineering licensure. Over the last ten years, the committee has been very successful publishing articles in *STRUCTURE* magazine, working with NCEES in the development of the 16-hour structural engineering examination, and encouraging consistency among states adopting structural engineering licensure.

In 2006, NCSEA established the Structural Engineering Certification Board (SECB) as an independent organization. The certification process provided an opportunity for those not licensed as structural engineers to be recognized for having met a higher standard. Except for those who signed up under a temporary “grandfathering” option to demonstrate their support for the concept, the requirements for certification include having passed 16 hours of structural licensing examination and meeting rigorous, ongoing continuing education requirements. SECB is now in the process of taking on some new initiatives to provide more value to its members and encourage more engineers to become certified. These include revising the website and providing a dashboard where members can record licensing information and continuing education of all types. SECB is also focusing more attention on stakeholders like architects, licensing boards, and building officials to make them better aware of the existence and value of the credential.

In some states where structural engineering licensure has been pursued, opponents have claimed that there are four structural engineering organizations, each of which has a different position on licensing. In order to dispel this misconception, NCSEA and SECB joined with the Structural Engineering Institute (SEI) of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the Council of American Structural Engineers (CASE), a coalition of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), to form the Structural Engineering Licensure Coalition (SELC). Its purpose was and remains “to serve as a united

voice for the structural engineering profession for the promotion of structural engineering licensure.” SELC is led by a Steering Committee consisting of two representatives from each organization. The Steering Committee is responsible for coordinating the licensure-related activities of each organization and facilitating joint efforts.

The SELC website ([www.selicensure.org](http://www.selicensure.org)) provides articles, case studies, and presentations on the importance of structural engineering licensure and various efforts to bring it about throughout the country. For example, in Washington, Oregon, and Utah, design by a licensed

structural engineer is required only for higher-risk buildings and challenging bridges. A recent initiative of SELC was to develop a list of recommended criteria to define such significant structures. The document is shared with other state committees and licensing boards as a guideline for developing the rules and regulations that would govern structural engineering licensure if it were to be adopted in accordance with such a “partial practice restriction” model.

SELC has been working with the National Society of

Professional Engineers (NSPE), traditionally the most vocal opponent of structural engineering licensure, to help its national and state-level leaders and members understand what we are trying to do and why it is important to the entire professional engineering community. SELC has also set up a Structural Caucus at the annual business meeting of the National Council of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors (NCEES) to educate its members, who are the members of the state licensing boards.

All of these efforts exist for one single reason – to protect the safety, health, and welfare of the public by raising the bar for the practice of structural engineering. Each of the organizations involved has a different role in this quest. More than ten years ago, in my May 2008 editorial in *STRUCTURE* magazine, I expressed my support of structural engineering licensure in each jurisdiction. That continues to be my goal, and I believe that the efforts of these groups will help the profession eventually achieve it. ■



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