

February 18, 2015

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Representative Bob Thorpe
1700 W. Washington
Room 130
Phoenix, AZ 85007

SUBJECT: HB 2613 regulatory boards; licensing; revisions

Dear Representative Thorpe:

I am a Registered Professional Geologist in Arizona (No. 41786), a Senior Geologist with Amec Foster Wheeler, Inc. in Phoenix, Arizona, the most recent Past President of the Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists (AEG), and a resident of Flagstaff, Arizona. I am writing in opposition to HB 2613 to end licensure for professional geologists in Arizona. In brief, eliminating professional licensure for geologists would have a significant negative impact on the health and safety of the citizens of Arizona and negatively impact the economy.

Professional registration of geologists establishes qualifications through education, experience, and examination, to verify that those who practice provide the level of expertise needed to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. Under the proposed bill, anyone can practice and they are not held accountable to the citizens of Arizona. Additionally, privatization of professional registration removes accountability of those practicing a profession from the public view, decreases transparency, and does not establish an individual's qualifications through a rigorous process of examination and verification.

Registered Professional Geologists in Arizona provide needed protection for the health and safety of the citizens of Arizona by having verified geologists practicing in Arizona that have the skills, knowledge, and abilities to practice, in order to protect the public from unsafe practices by unqualified individuals. This often occurs in support of proper and professional engineering design of important infrastructure such as roadways, bridges, dams, levees, channels, basins, schools, hospitals, pipelines, and others. Primary examples of this are shown with recent landslides that have occurred along major state highways (Highway 89 between Flagstaff and Page and Highway 87 between Phoenix and Payson). These events caused major damage to the highways and limited commerce in these important areas. Through the involvement of Registered Professional Geologists no deaths occurred in this and the highways were rebuilt to limit the future potential of landslides. Additionally, the work of geologists in design of other highways can prevent similar failure from occurring.

Other examples where Registered Professional Geologists protect the health and safety of Arizona include the prevention of situations where our water infrastructure causes harm to the public like is occurring in Flint, Michigan where lead contamination has poisoned countless individuals. Areas where Registered Professional Geologists positively impact the economy and commerce include support of disclosure requirements for earth fissures in real estate transactions. This important form of disclosure protects home buyers, home sellers, and real estate professionals in an important economic driver of our state's

economy. Additionally, Registered Professional Geologists provide services to various agencies of the State of Arizona that result in cost reduction for projects (particularly infrastructure projects) as well as improved design quality. In short, their involvement reduces costs, increases public health and safety, and improves the quality of engineering design.

With over 12 years of experience as a Registered Professional Geologist in Arizona, over 15 years of professional employment in Arizona, and my recent service as the President of AEG, I can provide many more examples where the registration of geologists protects the health and safety of the public and is a benefit to the economy. Again, I strongly urge you to not support HB 2613.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding geologist licensure and the effects of licensure programs on the practice of geology.

Sincerely,

Ken Fergason
Past President, AEG

Senior Geologist, Amec Foster Wheeler

Registered Professional Geologist AZ #41786
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