



**Senate Finance Committee
Matt Johnson, P.E., Branch Manager
June 8, 2023**

Dear Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Cirino, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and all members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am Matt Johnson, P.E., Branch Manager at Palmer Engineering – Medina, Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on Sub. House Bill 33 – specifically: LOCCD33 County Engineer qualifications.

I'm in the same industry as County Engineers, so I think this is one of the rare instances where I can offer an opinion of actual value. I spoke with a few County Engineers to express my concerns after seeing the language inserted in HB 33 in the Senate. While I am sure smaller counties have trouble finding qualified candidates for County Engineer, that's not enough justification to water down those qualifications.

There are thousands of licensed PE's in the state of Ohio, but not all of them are Civil Engineers. Mechanical Engineers, Chemical Engineers, Electrical Engineers, and Petroleum Engineers are just a few of the other professions whose members routinely obtain PE registration. There is NO distinction made between a PE with a Mechanical Engineering background and one with a Civil Engineering background. But, clearly, a County Engineer needs to have a background in Civil Engineering.

Taking that one step further, there are numerous Civil Engineers whose careers do not involve roadway and bridge design and construction. It is my assumption that the majority of PE holders in Ohio would be completely unprepared for County Engineer work...even if that work did not involve any surveying.

But, the County Engineer role DOES involve surveying and providing counsel to townships and other locals on surveying issues. Many County Engineer offices would lack the budget to maintain a licensed professional surveyor on staff if that role were not also fulfilled by the elected County Engineer.

Being a County Engineer is a unique role in Ohio that requires unique qualifications. It's true, there are not as many dual registrants in rural counties as there are in urban, but it's also important to recognize obtaining dual registration has become an integral part of the training to be a County Engineer. I think it's reasonable to say the majority of young engineers pursuing their survey license are doing so with an eye on becoming a County Engineer one day. The net effect being that a candidate bearing both an engineering and surveying license is, more than likely, competent to be a County Engineer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Matthew L. Johnson'.

Matthew L. Johnson, P.E.
Project Manager
Palmer Engineering