



Ohio House Government Oversight Committee

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Chairman Peterson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and Members of House Government Oversight Committee thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony for HB 430. My name is Brett Boothe, Gallia County Engineer and Past President of the County Engineers Association of Ohio (CEAO).

I stand before you to advocate for HB 430's removal of the private practice compensation penalty. Permitting an individual to maintain their private practice while serving as county engineer in Ohio can promote efficiency, innovation, economic growth, and collaboration in the delivery of engineering and surveying services while upholding ethical standards and public trust. The current private practice compensation penalty acts as a deterrent for a current and future County Engineer to keep or open a private practice. Additionally, the private practice compensation penalty makes the consideration of running for this position unattractive – if not impossible.

History of Ohio's Elected County Engineer, P.E., P.S.

Ohio added the qualification of Professional Engineer (P.E.) to the elected County Surveyor (P.S.) position in 1935 to reflect the changing nature of engineering and the needs of the communities it serves. The position of County Engineer (P.E., P.S.) is an important part of county government, and County Engineers (P.E., P.S.) are expected to have a unique combination of technical expertise and public service.

The combination of a P.E. and P.S. license in a County Engineer enhances the county's capacity to manage land development, infrastructure projects, and surveying activities effectively. It promotes interdisciplinary collaboration, improves project outcomes, and strengthens the county's ability to meet the needs of its constituents. Additionally, the combination of the qualifications of a P.E. and P.S. in one position as the County Engineer results in financial benefits through improved project efficiency, cost savings, and enhanced project outcomes.

Professional Land Surveying (P.S.)

In an era of technological advancement and urban expansion, the profession of land surveying, once a crucial cornerstone of society, is facing a national decline in numbers. The art of mapping and measuring land with precision, once hailed as a noble and essential profession, is struggling to attract young talent. The shortage of professional land surveyors poses a significant challenge to urban planning, infrastructure development, and property rights delineation.

Ohio's Momentum in Growing Professional Land Surveyors (P.S.) – Recent Changes to Professional Surveyor Registration in Ohio

Prior to 2019 the Board administered approximately 25 Ohio Professional Surveyor exams per year and licensed between 3-5 dual registrants per year. Recognizing the need to increase the number of registered professional surveyors in Ohio, in Fall 2019 the Board established a task force to study the surveying profession in Ohio and to make recommendations to the Board on how the State of Ohio could increase the number of individuals pursuing professional surveyor registration and increase opportunities for individuals to pursue surveying as a profession without diminishing the licensing requirements.

The task force was made up of individuals and professional surveyors representing various segments of the surveying profession, including academia, the private sector [both large and small firms], and surveyors employed by government agencies and elected county engineer's offices. The Task force proposed the following changes:

- Created an additional pathway for surveyor registration for college graduates who complete 30 hours of surveying coursework.
- Accept part-time surveying experience.
- Accept overlapping engineering and surveying experience reducing the time to become registered as a dual by two years.

The Board recognized that ensuring that Ohio has enough surveyors to protect Ohio’s homeowner’s and business owner’s property rights is vital to public protection. Professional surveyors play an important role in land development and maintaining the accuracy of land divisions and property boundaries. The Board adopted the task force’s recommendations in January 2021.

The changes have also increased opportunities for professional engineers to pursue professional surveyor licensure and widen the pool of candidates eligible to serve as Ohio’s elected county engineers, which requires dual registration as a P.E., P.S. to perform their statutory duties.

Since the Board adopted the changes, the Board has seen a significant increase in the number of applicants taking the Ohio Professional Surveyor exam and becoming a professional surveyor in Ohio.

| NUMBER OF PS EXAMINEES BY YEAR | |
|---|----|
| 2020 | 22 |
| 2021 | 32 |
| 2022 | 47 |
| 2023 | 68 |
| NUMBER OF DUAL REGISTRANTS [PE/PS] LICENSED BY YEAR | |
| 2018 | 3 |
| 2019 | 6 |
| 2020 | 7 |
| 2021 | 8 |
| 2022 | 11 |
| 2023 | 8 |

The P.S. Is An Essential Part Of Land Records For The County Engineer Position

Surveying isn’t just essential to a county like Gallia County, surveying is crucial to land records for all counties, no matter their size. A County Engineer uses their P.S. in several ways to support their office and the public:

Boundary Determination: I am asked weekly to accurately establish the boundaries of a piece of land. This is essential for defining property ownership and resolving disputes.

Legal Documentation: County Engineers are often asked for their expertise by County Prosecutors and private citizens to provide legal documentation of land boundaries, which is necessary for property transactions, land development, and resolving legal disputes related to property ownership.

Land Use Planning: We are asked to provide surveying help and understanding in land use planning by providing precise information about the size, shape, and topography of the land. This information is vital for urban planning, infrastructure development, and environmental management.

Resource Management: It is essential for the county engineer to not just house, but understand how to create accurate land surveys to help counties, townships, and municipals in their management of Ohio’s natural resources such as forests, water bodies, and minerals by delineating their boundaries and assessing their extent.

Tax Assessment: The County Engineer provides land surveys to our other local partners to assist in determining the value of a property for tax assessment purposes. By accurately measuring the land area and assessing its characteristics, tax authorities can levy appropriate taxes.

Infrastructure Development: For economically booming counties like central Ohio region; surveying plays a crucial role in infrastructure development projects such as roads, railways, pipelines, and utilities. It provides essential information for designing, constructing, and maintaining infrastructure networks.

Overall, surveying ensures the County Engineer's integrity of land records by providing accurate and reliable information about land boundaries, which is essential for various legal, economic, and developmental purposes.

Mapping Ohio's Future: Permitting A County Engineer To Keep Or Open A Private Practice in Professional Land Surveying Without A Compensation Penalty Benefits Ohio's Surveyor Shortage

Professional Land Surveyors are an essential part of the real estate industry. They provide critical information about the land, boundaries, and other features that are important for property ownership and development. Despite the importance of their work, there has been a national shortage of surveyors in recent years.

County Engineers Association of Ohio commends the Board and its efforts it has made thus far to increase the number of Professional Land Surveyors in Ohio. HB 430 would be the next logical step in adding more P.S. into our state. Additionally, not penalizing an elected County Engineer for having a private practice will open the field to more possible candidates to run for office.