

Dear Senator Walters,

SUPPORT SB 692

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to review the legal opinion of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, dated 7-22-11. Our University of California schools provide an education in the field of engineering that meets the highest standards existing anywhere in the world. Our universities also provide courses in the sciences that meet similar standards. We make this point not as a matter of pride, which would be warranted, but as a concern. The legal opinion makes it clear that the Professional Engineers Act threatens the ability of our graduates to provide their services in our state to meet its many challenges.

We also have reviewed your bill, SB 692, which addresses this situation. It proposes to make competence the standard under which engineering services are performed, as is the case in almost every other state. We support this change in the law. In fact, the failure to make this change will have consequences that are difficult to comprehend.

The opinion concludes that only a licensed civil engineer, who is competent, can provide the necessary services to develop the “permanent established works” that comprise the totality of our infrastructure. Prior to receiving the opinion this was never our understanding of the law. No other state, or possibly any other country, has such a restricted policy for the engineering profession.

Previously some of us expressed support for reforming the law to treat all engineering disciplines with equal respect. It was an expression of the need for equity in a profession consisting of disciplines with equivalent qualifications. On its face the law has two tiers of licensing, and that seemed to only be a nuisance in the marketplace.

The opinion has been circulated within the academic community. It is impossible to ignore its impacts on almost all professions engaged in the field of technology. Any professional expertise associated with a facility contemplated as a “fixed work” may be arbitrarily restricted unless provided by a competent licensed civil engineer. There is no justification for such a restriction.

We cannot be more emphatic in urging the Legislature and governor to approve SB 692, and to accomplish this necessary reform of the law. Please let us know if we can be of more assistance.

Sincerely,

We the undersigned UC Engineering Deans

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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