

(Endorsed by the Coalition, March 8, 2006)

**Recommendations Of the Board of Registration Coalition  
for Improving the Performance of the  
Georgia State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and  
Land Surveyors**

**Background**

In December, 2004, a Task Force created by the Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (PELS Board) recommended a number of initiatives to improve the performance of the PELS Board. Included in the list was the creation of a coalition of professional engineering and surveying societies to “facilitate collaboration and coordinate advocacy for a high performance licensing board...”. In March, 2005, the Georgia Society of Professional Engineers (GSPE) invited 15 engineering organizations and the Surveying and Mapping Society of Georgia (SAMSOG) to participate in such a coalition.

The coalition has held monthly meetings to discuss issues, the results of research, and possible solutions. The coalition has also met with the PELS Board on two occasions to exchange information and ideas.

The following six (6) problems were quickly identified by the coalition as the primary issues that needed to be addressed:

1. The PELS Board is widely perceived by both professionals and others as largely ineffective in policing the profession.
2. There is no regular communication between the PELS Board and registrants and between the PELS Board and the general public.
3. The size of the PELS Board’s administrative staff is too small to process applications within a reasonable timeframe when benchmarked with other states..
4. The PELS Board shares its executive director, legal counsel and investigators with several other boards, resulting in procedural delays and inefficiencies.
5. As a result of an inadequate staff support system, PELS Board members must perform most of their duties on their personal time and using personal resources.
6. Also as a result of inadequate staffing, there is no audit of continuing education credits.

**Findings**

The coalition was able to conclude very quickly that one of the problems hampering the performance of the PELS Board is the overall lack of resources. The current funding level allows only for a part-time executive director, a part-time complaint officer, and two full-time administrative persons. The staff is dedicated and hard-working, but not large enough to process comity requests and examination applications simultaneously.

There is no manpower available to begin auditing continuing education credits. PELS Board members are already working extra hours to satisfy needs not met by the staff.

Legal and investigative support is provided on an as-needed basis by the Attorney General's and Secretary of State's offices. Continuity has been an issue at times with the legal support, and not all of the investigators are familiar with engineering and surveying issues.

A website on the Internet has replaced written communications between the Board and registrants. While financially more efficient, the website is not a proactive means of interaction between the PELS Board and registrants

The second major problem is that the PELS Board is appointed by the governor while the support staff reports to the Secretary of State. Consequently, PELS Board members do not have direct oversight of the staff, which hinders effective communication and blurs accountability.

### **Recommendations**

The coalition recommends that funding, procedural and structural changes be made in the operation of the PELS Registration Board. Specifically, the coalition advocates the following changes:

- 1) Make the PELS Board a separate budgetary unit within the Secretary of State's office.
- 2) Outsource all the support functions required by the PELS Board to a private, non-profit Georgia corporation created specifically to provide these services exclusively to the PELS Board. This private, non-profit corporation shall hire a full-time executive director and staff as needed to support fully the activities of the PELS Registration Board.
  - a. Charge and collect fees which shall approximate the total of direct and indirect costs to the state of the operations of the PELS Registration Board.
  - b. Require the corporation to develop and track, in consultation with the PELS Board, performance goals to support the annual budget request and any requested increase in registration or renewal fees.
  - c. Allow the Secretary of State's office to conduct both performance and financial audits of the non-profit corporation.
- 3) Legislate, advocate and enforce more stringent civil penalties for violations of PELS registration laws.
- 4) Develop and implement more robust communication with the public and technical community as to PELS Board activities.

### **Required Actions**

Implementing the recommendations will require legislative changes to the statutes that define and govern the PELS Registration Board. Changing the enabling legislation will not be an easy task and will require the cooperation and active

support of the engineering and surveying organizations in the state. The coalition's recommendations needed to be presented to these organizations for endorsement of the concepts, and a joint strategy needs to be developed for introducing and passing the changes through the General Assembly.

Endorsed by:  
(list of societies/associations)  
From Tom Leslie  
March 9, 2006

BOR Coalition

As many of you know the BOR Coalition met yesterday and carefully reviewed the draft recommendations. The attached document was unanimously endorsed by the Coalition. This is a very significant milestone. The Coalition members were requested to take this document to each association and seek its endorsement of the document. The idea is that over the next couple of months we would add the names of the endorsing associations to the end of the document.

Accordingly, you are asked to take this document to the board of your association and ask them to endorse it. If there remains broad support for the recommendations, then the BOR Coalition would continue to meet monthly to work on implementation strategies, including writing legislation, speaking to critical elected officials, and continuing as the essential link between the Coalition and each participating association.

Make no mistake, implementation of the Coalition's recommendations is a very ambitious initiative. It will require extensive communication and developing a sense of trust and teamwork among the associations.

The Coalition asked that I request of you:

1. Would you ask your association to endorse the attached document and the recommendations in it?
2. The BOR Coalition intends to continue to meet monthly and, therefore, your appointees to the Coalition are requested to continue their service.
3. Please let me know the date when your association will consider endorsement of the document.
- 4.. The goal is to have a broad list of endorsing association by May 2006 so that we may engage in conversations with a variety of elected officials regarding their support of the recommendations.
5. The intent is to have implementation legislation prepared in the fall and introduced in the 2007 session of the General Assembly.
6. The BOR Coalition will continue to 'quarterback' our joint effort at implementation.

Tom Leslie

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Page 2, Tom Leslie email

<<Recommendations Final, 3-8-06.doc>>  
Preliminary Endorsement Schedule  
ACEC/G - March 17  
GSPE - March 21  
SAMSOG - April 1  
ASCE - April 7

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Board of Registration Coalition

The Board of Registration is at the very core of the GSPE mission. To enhance the performance of the Board in all respects, GSPE invited other Georgia Engineering and Surveying Associations to participate in a coalition to “facilitate collaboration and coordinate advocacy”.

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March 9, 2005

## **Charter for the Board of Registration Coalition**

The State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (BOR) affects a very broad array of people who are members of various professional associations. These associations have an interest in the activities of the BOR and a desire to see its effectiveness enhanced. A special task force, appointed by the BOR, has completed a self-evaluation and reported the results of its work to the BOR on December 14, 2004. The Task Force recommended that a coalition of engineering and surveying associations be “created to facilitate collaboration and coordinate advocacy” for implementation of the Task Force report. This Charter is intended to set out (1) a way to form such a Coalition, (2) provide a purpose and an initial list of activities, and (3) outline operating assumptions.

### **Formation of Coalition**

There are several dozen engineering associations that for many years have jointly organized activities to celebrate Engineers Week. These engineering societies are assumed to be the target associations for participation in the BOR Coalition. Each of these associations would be invited to participate. There is one primary land surveyor association, Surveying and Mapping Society of Georgia (SAMSOG) that is vitally interested in licensing issues. The Coalition would be composed of several people (say 2-3) nominated by each society that agrees to participate. To initiate the Coalition, the Georgia Society of Professional Engineers, whose primary purpose is serving licensed Professional Engineers from all technical disciplines, would appoint a convening Chair. At several organizing meetings, this charter would be reviewed and provisionally accepted and a general operating procedure established.

### **Purpose and Activities**

The fundamental purpose of the Coalition is to channel a concern by registrants for the BOR into a plan for, and long-term advocacy of, a high-performance BOR. The Coalition will institutionalize a mechanism for such advocacy. To achieve this goal, the Coalition will undertake the following initial activities:

Have at least one Coalition member assigned to attend each BOR meeting and also designate an alternate. This designee is charged with reporting to the full Coalition on the activities of the BOR.

Set and measure a goal for all Coalition members to attend at least two BOR meetings per year.

Monitor implementation of the recommendations of the PE/LS Task Force Report. If a recommendation is not being implemented, consider if the recommendation is still appropriate. If it is, then offer to assist the BOR in developing a strategy to assure that it is implemented.

Provide a forum for all associations to fully participate in a dialogue about the BOR and the issues associated with it. A high performance BOR can only occur if there is broad consensus regarding what constitutes “high-performance” and the actions that lead to it.

Study the structure, activities, available resources, and legal basis for PE/LS BORs in the rest of the country, but especially in the Southeast, to be fully aware of other states' approach to licensing engineers and surveyors. Study "best practices" in other states and how they could be applied to Georgia.

Periodically prepare interim white papers on study topics of the Coalition and circulate them to the engineering/surveying community as the basis for thoughtful discussion by the leadership of professional associations, the BOR, and other stakeholders.

At least annually, meet with the Office of the Secretary of State to communicate the sentiments of the Coalition; a "State of the BOR" meeting.

The Coalition is expected to amend this list of activities over time and as needs and circumstances change.

### Operating Assumptions

The Coalition will operate by consensus, with no bylaws/constitution/dues. It is acknowledged that each participating association is free to take whatever action it feels is necessary in accordance with its own governing structure. It is hoped that meetings of the Coalition will lead to broad agreement on matters related to the BOR. An underlying assumption is that if all member associations agree on a course of action and a desired outcome, then achievement will be far more likely. It may be that modest initial changes are necessary to build strong working relationships and demonstrate the effectiveness of collaboration.

It is the strategic goal of the Coalition, however, to envision long-term outcomes that may take years to achieve. While the Coalition would initially deal with the issues in the PE/LS Task Force report, longer-term issues could be the institutional arrangements for the BOR, the requirements of becoming licensed, and other items that could take time for implementation based on coordinating a consensus position.

The Coalition is a place for communication of ideas and coordination of activities among interested stakeholders, both individually and for the associations that represent their interests.

The Coalition will have a Chair to call and preside at its meetings. This position is assumed to rotate among Coalition associations, but the primary selection criteria will be the need for skilled leadership of the Coalition. The Coalition may choose a Vice Chair who would preside in the absence of the Chair and would be the presumptive successor to the sitting Chair. GEA will provide administrative support for the Coalition.

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### Board of Registration Coalition Membership Roster

ACEC/G - Don Hill, Rick Toole, Tom Gambino

ASCE - Major Thompson

ASHE - Richard Meehan

ASME - Randy Rimes

IEEE - Wei Zhao, Chase Battaglio

GEF - Mike Caldwell, Doug Weaver

GPEA - Anita Perry

GSPE - Tommy Furlow, Bill Jorden, Dan McGill

SAMSOG - Tommie Donaldson, Dean Olson, Trent Turk, Bob White

SEAOG - Mike Fletcher, Al Lagerstrom

State Board of Registration for PE & LS Liaison – Doris Willmer

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