



August 8, 2012

Mr. Jerry Carter, Executive Director
NCEES
280 Seneca Creek Road
Seneca, SC 29678

RE: Term “Engineering Surveys”

Dear Mr. Carter:

The National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS) wishes to engage in dialog with NCEES, and requests that NCEES reconsider its use of the term “Engineering Surveys”.

For your consideration, attached is a motion presented by the NSPS Board of Governors, and approved by the NSPS Board of Directors at its Spring 2012 meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, requesting that NSPS petition NCEES remove the term “Engineering Surveys” and its definition from the NCEES Model Laws, Chapter 110.20 Definitions, Section A, Paragraph 5.

NSPS understands that NCEES has guidelines for addressing issues brought before it, and requests that this petition from NSPS be considered through this process, allowing NSPS as a member of the NCEES Participation Organizations Liaison Council (POLC) to participate in discussions related to the topic.

As is detailed in the attached motion, there are several reasons that are germane to the requested removal. Among these, we emphasize the mission of NCEES to protect the public through a licensing process which demonstrates a standard of competency in both engineering and surveying practices. Further, each professional member of NSPS, as a professional surveyor, has an ethical responsibility to also ensure and protect the public welfare. That said, we believe it is our duty as professionals to express our concerns regarding this matter.

Over time, all of the components of surveying, not just “boundary surveying” have become technically more demanding. At the same time, the need for reasoned judgment and nuanced decision making has become increasingly pervasive, and again not just within “boundary surveying” but throughout the broadest definition of surveying practice. This comes at a time when the breadth and the technical demands of modern engineering have also expanded. Engineering curricula have been adjusted accordingly. The unfortunate result is that engineering curricula have minimized emphasis on surveying principals at the same time surveying has become more technical and nuanced in all its forms.

In this circumstance, NSPS believes that we all should approach with great caution any actions that could potentially dilute or blur the standards of competency used to determine the scope of the practice of both surveying and engineering. NSPS, through its affiliates, the state surveying societies, has witnessed a national trend that would lead to just such a dilution, through the use of the term “engineering surveys”, to blur the definition between the scope of engineering and the scope of surveying. Several state legislatures have initiated legislation that would use this term to broaden the scope of engineering into practices that are, in the best public interest, left in the hands of surveying professionals who have been trained, educated and tested for competency in such practices.

It is our suggestion that the term “engineering survey” and its definition be removed from the Model Law. We believe this be an appropriate means to ensure the public safety without impeding commerce in any way it is not currently affected. There are no laws we are aware of that bar corporations or individuals from offering multi-disciplined practice for which there is demonstrated competence, nor laws that would prevent an individual from holding joint licenses, thus demonstrating competency in all areas of professional practice in which one engages.

Sincerely,

Robert Dahn
President, NSPS

Cc: Dale Jans, P.E., NCEES President
Gene Dinkins, P.E., P.L.S., NCEES President-Elect