

Date: April 15, 2020

To: DSPS Secretary Dawn B. Crim and Governor's Policy Director Jenni Dye

RE: Continuing Education for Professional Engineers

Under the stressful social and economic conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all doing our best to contribute while following the Safer-At-Home order issued by Governor Evers. Professional Engineers are adapting to do what they can by working remotely assisting manufacturers in ramping up or converting to production of critical products. Others are working to support their clients, including local governments, in response to government orders.

For the past few weeks, our engineers have been working longer hours under elevated levels of stress to aid in addressing this pandemic, and are now focusing on getting Wisconsin's economy back on track. We expect this recovery effort to continue for months to come before we can return to a condition of normality. For the benefit of all, we must do what we can to support our engineers who play a critical role in this most important process.

In addition to longer hours of work, all of their personal lives have been affected in some way, as our families are also coping with schools closed and spouses unable to work. This social situation has put a substantial burden on internet traffic and availability. Many areas of our state experience inadequate internet access as we are largely comprised of rural communities.

The code requires that P.E.'s get a minimum of 13 PDH's of the 30 required from continuing education (CE) courses where the registrant interacts in real time in a traditional classroom setting, computer conferencing or interactive video conference where participants are present in the same room or logged in at the same time and can communicate directly with each other and ask questions of the instructor. These offerings are limited and without adequate internet access, these requirements must be fulfilled via professional events and activities which are all, at the current time, banned from taking place for an unknown period of time.

Many P.E.'s rely upon technical and professional conferences to get their PDH's. For Wisconsin P.E.'s, the primary resources are the spring conferences held by WSPE and the ASCE. The WSPE Discovery Conference provides fifteen PDH's each spring. But this conference has been postponed until October. ASCE has postponed or cancelled their spring conference. Many P.E.'s were expecting to fulfill their requirements at these conferences.

We understand that there is a proposal to maintain the original renewal deadline of July 31, 2020 and allow submissions of waiver requests for all who cannot comply. In the best interest of the State of Wisconsin and all involved, we recommend that the deadline for getting the PDH's be extended to **December 31, 2020**. The deadline for renewal of P.E. registration could still be July 31, 2020. Currently, P.E.'s do not have to submit their CE records with renewal requests. They do need to produce them when audited for cause by DSPS. So, this proposal would not be disruptive to DSPS. In hopes that we return to a prosperous state by then, this recommendation gives the P.E.'s time to both, assist in the recovery while meeting their continuing education requirements. By providing this extension, the number of waivers to be processed by DSPS will be greatly reduced while conserving valuable resources.

Sincerely,


John C. Kustka, P.E.

President, Wisconsin Society of Professional Engineers