

## Committee on Innovation, Industry, And Technology

### **CS/CS/HB 827 — Engineering**

by Commerce Committee; Business and Professions Subcommittee; and Rep. Toledo (CS/CS/CS/SB 616 by Rules Committee; Community Affair Committee; Innovation, Industry, and Technology Committee; and Senator Perry)

The bill amends s. 337.14, F.S., to prohibit an entity from performing both design services and construction engineering and inspection services for a project wholly or partially funded by the Department of Transportation and administered by a local governmental entity.

The bill amends s. 455.271, F.S., to provide a board or the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) must adopt a rule to establish a reinstatement process for void licenses.

The Florida Board of Professional Engineers (board) in the DBPR Division of Professions regulates the practice of engineering. The board is responsible for reviewing applications, administering exams, licensing qualified applicants, and regulating and enforcing the proper practice of engineering in the state. By contract with the DBPR, the Florida Engineers Management Corporation (FEMC) provides administrative, investigative, and prosecutorial services to the board.

The bill amends various provisions in ch. 471, F.S., relating to the practice of engineering and licensure, to:

- Remove the requirement for engineering firms to pay a \$125 fee for a certificate of authorization to practice engineering in the state; instead, a Florida-licensed engineer must qualify the firm to practice engineering in the state under specified conditions;
- Add an additional method for graduates with approved engineering science or engineering technology degrees to take the licensure examination before obtaining active engineering experience and removes an obsolete provision;
- Increase the required years of experience for graduates with engineering technology degrees, from four years to six years;
- Require applicants for licensure to submit proof of being at least 18 years old;
- Allow the board to extend the 90-day time limit for it to act on an application for licensure, when a personal appearance by the applicant before the board is required;
- Amend the procedure for engineering and firms from outside of Florida to obtain a temporary registration to practice engineering in the state for up to one year, on one specified project, and to appoint the Florida Department of State as an agent for service of process for specified proceedings; and
- Require successor engineers to assume full responsibility when assuming the work of another engineer; and releases an original engineer from liability for prior work assumed by the successor engineer.

The bill amends s. 553.79, F.S., to specify the stages of construction during which a special inspector must perform structural inspections on a threshold building. A threshold building is one higher than three stories or 50 feet in height, or which has an assembly occupancy classification exceeding 5,000 square feet in area and an occupancy of greater than 500 persons.

The bill also amends s. 553.791, F.S., relating to alternate construction inspection services and plans review, to establish shortened deadlines for local building official notices and responses, for projects on which a private provider has been retained to perform inspections and plans reviews on behalf of the project owner. The bill provides a local building official may not prohibit a private provider from performing inspections outside the official's normal operating hours, including after hours, weekends, or holidays.

The bill also shortens deadlines for issuance of building permits and notices of plan deficiencies by local building officials.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect October 1, 2019.

*Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0*