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American Council of
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of Massachusetts

The Engineering Center
One Walnut Street
Boston, MA 02108-3616

Phone
617/227-5551

Fax
617/227-6783

Email
acecma@engineers.org

Web
www.acecma.org

Twitter
@ACECMA

February 22, 2017

The Honorable Peter V. Kocot, House Chairman, State House, Room 22
The Honorable Walter F. Timilty, Senate Chairman, State House, Room 320
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
State House, Room 22
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Kocot, Chairman Timilty, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts (ACEC/MA), I am writing to express our support for *HB 68, An Act to Reorganize the Department of Public Safety*, which will benefit the Commonwealth by creating efficiency, eliminating redundancies, and reducing costs by reorganizing and consolidating licensing functions currently spread among several departments.

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts is the business association of engineering, land surveying and other design professional firms in Massachusetts. Our firms design the public and private infrastructure that contributes to the economic vitality and quality of life here in the Commonwealth. We have 120 member firms employing about 7000 people in the Commonwealth, including engineers, land surveyors, architects, planners and other professionals focused on public and private infrastructure.

Currently, many licensing boards are split among different secretariats and agencies, causing inefficiency, inconsistency, and confusion. Passage of HB 68 will maximize the coordination of various construction-related codes. The Department of Public Safety regulates the functions and responsibilities of the Board of Building Regulations and Standards, the Architectural Access Board, the Board of Elevator Regulators, and the Bureau of Pipefitters, Refrigeration Technicians and Sprinklerfitters, among others. The Division of Professional Licensure oversees these construction and/infrastructure related boards: Home Inspectors, Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors, Architects, Landscape Architects, Operators of Drinking Water Supply Facilities, Plumbers and Gas Fitters, Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors, Electrical Examiners, and Sheet Metal Workers, among others.

As an organization representing engineering, land surveying, and other design professional firms, our members regularly work with many of these boards, the state building code and various existing specialty codes, to design buildings and other infrastructure. Sometimes this involves related matters, but having the boards under different secretariats and agencies creates complexity for many projects.

Consolidating certain licensing boards within a newly established Office of Public Safety and Inspections within the Division of Professional Licensure will better align these boards under an agency experienced in overseeing licensing and protecting consumers, creating administrative efficiencies. This will also help businesses and consumers that rely on a consistent and predictable environment. Additionally, DPL has made significant strides in the implementation of online licensing; this experience could be applied more broadly to the DPS boards lacking online capacity. Consolidation will facilitate the sharing of best practices as the combined agencies work to a unified licensing model.

We respectfully request the committee favorably report House Bill 68, An Act to Reorganize the Department of Public Safety. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact me at 617-305-4112 or agoodman@engineers.org.

Sincerely,
American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts


Abbie R. Goodman, Executive Director