

Testimony from ACEC/MA
HB 68, *An Act to Reorganize the Department of Public Safety*,
Before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
Room B-1, February 22, 2017

The Honorable Peter V. Kocot, House Chairman, The Honorable Walter F. Timilty, Senate Chairman, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

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

My name is Dennis Coffey and I have worked in the engineering planning and design community here in Massachusetts for over 20 years. I am a resident of Yarmouth and formerly lived in Lowell.

I am here today on behalf of American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts (ACEC/MA), to testify in support of *HB 68, An Act to Reorganize the Department of Public Safety*, which will benefit the Commonwealth by creating efficiency, and eliminating redundancies by reorganizing and consolidating licensing functions that are currently spread among several departments.

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts is the business association of 120 engineering, land surveying and design professional firms in Massachusetts. Our member firms 7000 professional employees design public and private infrastructure that supports and enhances the economic vitality and quality of life in the Commonwealth. The 7000 employees include engineers, land surveyors, architects, planners and other professionals who are focused on designing and restoring the public and private infrastructure such as roads and bridges, residential and commercial buildings as well as water systems and power networks.

Currently there are many licensing boards that are split among four different secretariats, and this often leads to inefficiency, inconsistency, and confusion. We believe that passage of HB 68 will enable the efficient coordination of various construction-related codes and oversight of professional licensing.

Presently 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, and others.

The Division of Professional Licensure now 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 Board of Registration of Professional Engineers and of Land Surveyors Electrical Examiners, and Sheet Metal Workers, among others.

As an organization representing engineering, land surveying, architecture/engineering and other design professional firms, our members regularly work with these boards, as well as applying the state building code and other existing specialty codes, to design buildings and other infrastructure. Having these boards under different secretariats and agencies often creates complexity for these essential projects.

Consolidating and transferring certain licensing boards to 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. We believe this will create administrative efficiencies and also help businesses and consumers that rely on a consistent and predictable environment for permitting and licensing.

Additionally, the Department of Professional Licensure has made significant strides implementing online licensing and their experience could be applied more broadly to the other boards lacking that online capability.

Consolidation will facilitate the sharing of best practices as the combined agencies can work to a unified licensing model.

We respectfully request the committee favorably report out House Bill 68, An Act to Reorganize the Department of Public Safety.

Thank you for giving me the time to testify before you today.