

LES Legislative Update

April 21, 2016

By: Miles B. Williams

Text in regular font is original notes from Legislative Conference Call of March 8.

Text in italic font is notes for update of March 29.

Text in large bold font is notes for this update of April 21.

SB59 – Martiny Bill

The Senate Commerce Committee took up Senator Martiny’s S.B 59 on April 6th. As Chairman, Senator Martiny, managed the agenda to where he brought up S.B 59 last, at approximately 11:15. The Senator then spent about 5 minutes lecturing those in opposition about how he was misled last session and how he was upset about that. He then deferred the Bill without hearing any testimony. Miles, Brenda and Phil were in attendance for LES along with our lobbyists Randy & Ryan Haynie. David Patterson was on hand on behalf of LAPELS in case there were any questions for the Board.

Our lobbyist is cautiously optimistic that this is the end of it. Our path forward is to stand down on our grass roots efforts until it becomes clear that Martiny intends to move the Bill forward.

Also, our lobbyist recommended that we send a conciliatory letter to Senator Martiny. Miles will draft a letter for the president’s signature.

- We need to express our opposition to Senate & House Commerce Committee members since this is where the bill will be heard first. Important that we CALL or schedule a meeting with them, not just send emails. We concede that if Sen. Martiny wants to push his bill it will get out of the Senate Commerce Committee since he is chairman.

We have contacted many of the Committee members along with other Senators & Reps that LES members are acquainted with. We need to continue to make contacts and spread the word of LES’s opposition.

- LES Members were assigned committee members to contact, see both House and Senate lists for assignments.

A running list of contacts is being prepared to keep track – continue to make contacts.

- Need to develop Talking Points. Everyone was asked for input and Miles will compile and develop Talking Points to be distributed to group by Friday if possible.

Talking Points were generated and distributed to LES committee on March 11.

- Consider distributing Talking Points to membership and request that everyone that can, call Senator Martiny's office and express opposition. It would be most appropriate if it came from any LES members that are in Sen. Martiny's district.

Brenda sent email call to membership and all other registered engineers with Louisiana residency on March 16. From all the information we have received this effort has been effective and that the Senator has heard our message of opposition.

- We will consider what additional actions to take if the bill gets out of one or both of the committees. *LES Lobbyist Ryan Haynie met with Senator Martiny on March 28 to gauge his "mood" about SB 59. Ryan reported that Martiny is fully aware that LES (and generally the engineering profession) are opposed to the bill. This means our grassroots efforts are working. Ryan said Martiny indicated that he was not real strong on the bill, almost did not file it this session and realizes that it will not pass. He would not commit to pulling the bill but indicated that he will not put it on the agenda of his committee any time soon. Ryan said that LES should continue to work our plan to reach Senators and Representatives on the Commerce Committees.*

- Will coordinate our efforts and information with ACEC and ASCE. Will ask them to help with our efforts. Chris Richard will ask NSPE to send a letter of opposition. NCEES sent a letter of opposition to the bill last year, we will run that down and ask them to do the same this year.

Miles reached out to ASCE & ACEC/L by email on March 17 informing them of what we were doing and offering to meet with them to discuss further. ACEC/L invited Miles to their legislative meeting on March 30 which he will attend.

Chris Richard coordinated with NSPE and they issued an opposition letter to Senator Martiny dated March 18 (see attached).

- ASCE contact – Chris Humphries, President. Norma Jean is National President. *Contact made on March 17*

SB283 – Sharon Hewitt Military Bill

LES coordinated with Senator Hewitt and LAPELS regarding support of this bill. Minor suggested amendments proposed by LAPELS were accepted by the Senator. Based on advice from our lobbyist, LES's strategy was to downplay the bill as a housekeeping measure that should not be controversial.

SB 283 was heard and reported favorably out of the Senate Commerce Committee on April 13. A couple of LAPELS board members were there and filled out a white card – willing to answer questions. Senator Hewitt was provided a letter from LAPELS Board Member Ted Thompson explaining the problems with the current law. Finally Ryan Haynie filled out a green card in support on behalf of LES.

SB283 passed in the Senate by a vote of 33 to 2 on April 18. It now moves to the House Commerce Committee. Our lobbyist anticipates similar action as the Senate. We will employ the same strategy there.

- Miles will find out where it originated from.

Craig Dooley made the request of Senator Hewitt to sponsor this legislation. She is his Senator. She seems to understand the issue and is trying to help the profession and LAPELS by promoting this fix.

- Asked that LAPELS discuss and get back to this committee – LAPELS next board meeting is 3/21 LAPELS endorsed this legislation at their board meeting. They determined that some tweeks to the language would make it better and their Executive Director and lawyer are going to reach out to Senator Hewitt to see if she is receptive to amending the proposed bill. LES needs to consider supporting this bill.

From meeting with ACEC/L & LAPELS one additional Bill of Interest may be S.B. 239 by Senator Malkovich:

Proposed law provides that proper venue for all administrative hearings relative to the licensing, certification, discipline or registration of any regulated profession and occupation regulated by present law will be the parish wherein the licensee or certificate holder is domiciled.

LAPELS will make a determination about this bill. It appears to not be in the best interest of the public.