



Mention the words “demand-side legislation” to anyone outside the engineering profession and you’ll likely get a blank stare in return. Inside the profession, it’s a different story. Engineers are accustomed to legislation beyond the *Professional Engineers Act* that calls for them to perform particular tasks to protect the public—and they’re more than willing to serve. Demand-side legislation, a.k.a. external legislation, is so common, in fact, that no fewer than 55 pieces of Ontario legislation call for engineers’ input in one form or another.

Not surprisingly, legislation calling for engineers’ involvement is often written after tragedy strikes. A classic example: the events in the wake of the contaminated drinking water crisis in Walkerton (p. 56). As former PEO President Peter DeVita, P.Eng., puts it, “deaths took place to bring home the need for engineers...governments are most willing to act quickly when there is a disaster.”

Under the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, a direct result of the Walkerton incident, a professional engineer is, among other

Calling all P.Engs

tasks, now required to file a report on the drinking water quality of all municipal waterworks at least once every three years. And the *Clean Water Act*, passed last year, contains additional safeguards for water distribution systems, some of which incorporate input submitted to the Walkerton Inquiry by PEO and the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE).

While the concept of demand-side legislation is quite simple, the implications for individual practitioners and regulators can be complex. For example, the tasks set out in legislation to be performed by P.Engs may “add enormous liabilities to professional engineers that outweigh the benefits,” according to Bernard Ennis, P.Eng., PEO’s manager of practice and standards.

And, as Mike Mastromatteo writes in “How is demand-side legislation developed?” (p. 52), this legislation can also put pressure on self-regulation. Shouldn’t PEO dictate the roles and responsibilities of engineers conducting professional

engineering activities? No matter how well intended, demand-side legislation has the potential to clash with self-regulation. Case in point: PEO’s successfully resolved legal challenge to amendments to the *Ontario Building Code* (and subsequent cost award, p. 14).

Interesting, too, is that not all of the tasks reserved for engineers in demand-side legislation can be considered professional engineering. Engineers are frequently specified simply because they are trusted professionals who also have an accountability to a regulatory body. This work, however, imposes the same responsibilities on engineers as professional engineering work. As PEO Manager of Complaints and Discipline Bruce Matthews, P.Eng., explains, engineers who fail to perform these tasks to an acceptable standard may find themselves the target of a complaint to PEO (p. 51).

You’ll notice here a list of the issue themes we’ll be dealing with in our pages next year. Please consider this an open invitation to get involved with the content of this publication. Is there an article you’ve been dying to write on a subject you see here? Maybe you have particular expertise in one of the topics mentioned? Either way, I’d love to hear from you.

Before I sign off, I’ll direct your attention to the summary of the *2007 OSPE Employer Compensation Survey* (p. 17). Judging by the number of calls and emails I get on this subject, this is a popular item for engineers interested to see how they stack up salary-wise with their peers, and engineering firms wondering whether they offer competitive salaries. For information about getting your hands on the full survey results, see page 19.

Have a great holiday, everyone!

Jennifer Coombes
Managing Editor

2008 Editorial Calendar

January/February—Governance

In this issue, we’ll dissect the structure of PEO’s Council and committees, and explore why engineers should get involved in governing their profession.

March/April—Enforcement

PEO is adopting a more proactive stance on enforcement. We’ll showcase the efforts made to date, including a new video production.

May/June—Infrastructure

These days, the health of the province’s infrastructure is front-page news. We’ll look at what engineers’ responsibilities are when it comes to inspecting, maintaining and repairing our roads, waterworks and bridges.

July/August—Education

Do engineering graduates’ skills meet employer expectations? How has co-op education affected the profession? We’ll look at these questions and delve into PEO’s strategies to keep students on the path to licensure.

September/October—Public policy

Engineers and public policy makers should work hand-in-hand, but that’s not always the reality. We’ll look at why and how engineers should be involved in developing public policy, and why policy makers should listen to them.

November/December—Standards and regulations

We’ll explore the responsibility entrusted to PEO to establish and develop standards of engineering knowledge and skill, qualification, and professional ethics.