

What's in a name?

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Is it time to get rid of “professional” in our title? I hear a collective gasp of incredulity from many members.

While the *Professional Engineers Act* reserves the title “engineer” for licensed practitioners, there are still many references to “professional (sic) engineer” in the act. Attaching “professional” actually demeans “engineer.” Consider:

I do not retain a *professional* accountant to file my tax return; I retain an accountant.

My wife does not take our cats to a *professional* veterinarian; she takes them to a veterinarian.

I do not go to a *professional* physician for my annual check-up; I go to a physician.

My neighbour did not retain a *professional* architect to rebuild his home; he retained an architect.

These regulated professions practise under their core names with full recognition. So should we.

Our use of “professional” also hints of supplication. Dickens has his famous character Oliver Twist approach the workhouse master and say, “Please, sir, I want some more.” Essentially, we are saying to the world, “Please, sir, we are ‘professional’

engineers, not that other raggle-taggle kind, so please can we have some more?” Not a good strategy! It didn’t work for Oliver, either!

Simply replacing P.Eng. with Eng. would align ourselves with Quebec’s sensible ing. nomenclature. Professional Engineers Ontario could become Engineers Ontario. Engineers Canada (which we own with the other provinces) got it right from the beginning.

We could start the process by just doing it from now on. There is no logical conflict; just edit “professional” out of texts as and when updated. Of course, there’s a big blue sign over our headquarters building—leave it there for now! In due course it could be changed to read Engineers Ontario at a modest cost. Our friends at OSPE could easily become the Ontario Engineering Association to even better welcome their associate members.

Further, if we assume the designation Eng., I advocate it be placed in front of the name as an honourific, e.g. Eng. John/Jane Doe. Thus, a hypothetical ordained minister with a PhD and honoured by Engineers Canada would be known as Rev. Dr. Eng. John/Jane Doe, FEC.

Words in the act would need changing, but not the meaning. Of course, it would impact the PEO brand. Marketers say don’t mess with the brand...when it is working. But our brand is struggling—see OSPE labour market studies. Too many BEng grads don’t pursue a licence and far too many engineers (no need to say “licensed engineers”) are under or unemployed. This is not the concern of the regulator, which is charged with enforcing the licence mandate. Unfortunately, large areas of engineering practice are inaccessible to PEO—the horse is, indeed, out of the barn.

I would like to hear opinions from members on the idea of just the “engineer” designation.

Lead time for licensure

Samantha Doyle, P.Eng.,
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204 days. That’s how long it took between the submission of my application for licensure until I received notice that my application had been successful. This is a truly unacceptable lead time. As young EITs wait for their licence, they are being denied further job opportunities and raises that a licence brings. I shudder to think of the cumulative financial impact this is having on young engineers across Ontario. Furthermore, we are told “not to request a status update” during this time. In my professional life, it would be unacceptable if I were to double lead times, and told my customers not to contact me. Why should PEO not have to adhere to the standards that engineers must follow in their careers? And for this pleasure we pay hundreds of dollars in application fees.

The application for licence system is clearly in need of a revamp. We deserve shorter lead times, and a more transparent application process, perhaps in the form of a portal with contact information and a status bar with milestones. That would be a much more inviting way to start our professional careers.

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Industrial exception revisited

Elio Comello, P.Eng.,
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The editor's note added to my letter ("Simplifying the situation," *Engineering Dimensions*, January/February 2017, p. 42) by PEO's enforcement team confirms the veracity of my example and its contentions. The industrial exception is a blanket; encompassing the entire practice of engineering, voiding the rigour, procedures and checks required of those who offer service to the public. I've discussed and championed this with peers, the PEO electorate and previous letters to the editor. Disbelief was common. I had great hopes that PEO's program for repeal would bear fruit. With the legislation withdrawn, PEO's response is condescending. We cannot protect the public interest. The editor's note confirms this: "PEO is unable to regulate the engineering work that is permitted under the exception." My example may have raised some eyebrows and educated others. Permit me to share another, based on an actual occurrence, being offered purely to illustrate the industrial exception's impact on our profession.

Example: An incident occurs, within the fenced boundary of an industrial facility. This incident causes property damage at a nearby residence and personal injury. A lawsuit for injury and property

damage follows. An incident investigation reveals deficient engineering as the root cause. The company is sued. An employee, not licensed, author of the engineering work, and a fellow employee in the department, a licensed engineer, are individually sued. Mediation by lawyers agree that the company did not use a person with credentials from a professional organization (insufficiently qualified), nor did company norms require professional supervision. Faced with a weak defense, the company settled out of court, governed by gag order and clauses of nondisclosure, leaving uncertainty regarding responsibility and liability impacting employee engineers. This outcome left many ambivalent about the value of professional membership. It led professional engineers (employees) to question the company about their roles and responsibilities. Another question was if legal and liability protection was part of their employment contract or left to the individual. These policy issues remained up in the air, and they were never made clear. The company did give notice that it expected eligible employees to secure PEO registration, with the company reimbursing membership fees. Curiously, titles such as engineering manager and engineering department remained.

In good conscience, how can PEO continue to "regulate the practice of professional engineering...in order that the public interest may be served and protected," when the majority of PEO members being employee engineers are exempt and therefore not regulated? Perhaps regulated industrially exempt engineering could have avoided the GM ignition switch litigation—just saying.

As a senior, retired, soon to surrender his seal, I would propose that PEO clearly state to the province that the exclusions granted by the industrial exception hobble and preclude any ability and therefore any responsibility associated with regulating "exempt" engineering. The industrial exception may be appropriate for a manufacturer of snow shovels or frisbees but for major industries and the safety of many products the public buys, not so much.

Questioning the cause

Ronald Bradshaw, P.Eng.,
Meaford, ON

Can you tell me: Are environmental engineers taught to accept that global warming is caused by man? ("Environmental concerns coaxing new levels of input from P.Engs," *Engineering Dimensions*, May/June 2017, p. 40). Not only I, but many other scientists and engineers, question the concept. To be brief, since the last Ice Age, global temperatures have been up and down over extended periods of time, plus 100 years, and obviously not caused by man.

Moreover, I ask because of the *Green Energy Act*, a product of the

concept, which is probably the greatest waste of taxpayer's money in Ontario's history. The cost of wind power, all things considered, is probably more than double nuclear or hydro. The establishment of new gas plant power was required to back up the unpredictable, intermittent wind power and no reasonable storage of wind power is available. So, when power is generated, more than a third is exported to the US at a fraction of the original cost, or simply dispatched, i.e. dumped (Ontario Independent Electricity System Operator).

With such conditions, would an environmental engineer consider wind (green) power to be a viable or reasonable alternative? As for the environment, when you fly over southwestern Ontario, the scope of the transformation of the landscape

is revealed. Over hundreds of square kilometres, the view is dominated by the ugly windmills. Would this transformation of the environment influence the plans or decision of an environmental engineer?

Although I am doubtful that any category of engineer would approve the *Green Energy Act*, it would be most interesting to hear the comments or position of this newly established engineering category.

The other side

Stephen Korn, P.Eng.,
Ajax, ON

I read the article "Environmental concerns coaxing new levels of input from P.Engs" (*Engineering Dimensions*, May/June 2017, p. 40) encouraging engineers to provide input on climate change and agree with the statement that I should be involved and that my voice be heard. The article is based on the premise that human-generated CO₂ emissions will cause catastrophic climate change, and also that the science is settled. There are two sides to every argument, however, and on this issue one side has been shouted down. Anyone who argues against man-generated CO₂ emissions as being the primary cause of global warming is marginalized, demonized and called a denier or a heretic. There are scientific reasons against human-generated CO₂ emissions as being the cause of global warming. Rather than repeat these, I will only reference a few sources for anyone who is interested in hearing the other side of the argument:

- CERN, the world's top particle physics research facility, has confirmed that it isn't man-made CO₂ that causes climate change; it's the sun (<https://townhall.com/columnists/dennisavery/2017/04/04/new-eurostudies-confirm-sun-dominates-earths-climate-n2308564>).
- Over 30,000 scientists from the National Academy of Sciences have signed a petition challenging man-caused global warming theory. Over 9000 of these scientists have PhDs (www.petitionproject.org).

- The Twelfth International Conference on Climate Change, which took place on March 23 to 24, 2017 in Washington, DC, provides a great deal of evidence against man-generated CO₂ as being the cause of global warming (<http://climateconference.heartland.org/>).

Probably more than a trillion dollars has been spent on reducing man-generated carbon emissions and trillions more could follow. This would be money immorally wasted if man-generated CO₂ emissions is not the problem.

Some reasons to question man caused global warming:

- The highly promoted Al Gore movie states that as atmospheric CO₂ changes, temperature follows. Actually, the reverse is true: CO₂ follows temperature.
- CO₂ is not a "pollutant" as some politicians in the United States have stated and have proposed into law. There is a huge benefit for a higher level of CO₂ in the atmosphere. The more CO₂ the better plant life thrives. This has huge implications for world food production.
- If all of the corn used for producing ethanol for automobiles were to be used for food instead, it would probably be sufficient to eliminate all hunger on the planet. This is a moral issue.
- Man-caused global warming theory was proposed by the United Nations Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Note the word "governmental" in the title. This is primarily a political panel, not a scientific one. Man-caused global warming theory is driven by politics, not science. Reference the YouTube video by Donna Laframboise (Canadian) for an evaluation of the IPCC (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5weFQYBL5w>).

I hope that scientists and engineers are brave enough to stand up for science and not be cowed by political correctness.

Affected by politics

James Brant, P.Eng.,
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Regarding rescinding the industrial exception, there was a great deal of interest in doing this in the best interest of public safety, however, I feel the government lost interest when it was discovered how many non-engineers doing engineering work were affected by the industrial exception. A lot of people would lose their jobs and blame the government and affect re-election chances for politicians in the ruling party. The government recanted on the plan to eliminate the industrial exception for personal, selfish interests (i.e. to get re-elected) at the expense of the safety of the general public.