

TESTIMONY
of
Brent M. Bridges, PE, Chair
STATE BOARD OF LICENSURE FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS
in support of
LD 576: An Act Regarding Reciprocal Licensure for Professional Engineers

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, my name is Brent Bridges, PE, and I serve as Chair of the State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers. I am speaking today in support of LD 576.

In a White House ceremony in June, 2023, President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced the Atlantic Declaration for a Twenty-First Century U.S.-UK Economic Partnership. Speaking at the time, Prime Minister Sunak declared it “An agreement to work towards mutual recognition of more professional qualifications in areas like engineering...”

David Cox, CEO of the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), and Dr. David Clark of the UK Engineering Council, worked over the following year to craft a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) to facilitate professional engineering licensure mobility between the two nations, which was signed in August, 2024. Because professional licensure in the US is by jurisdiction, each state must enact any legislation or rules needed to support the MRA. LD 576 would allow the MRA to take effect in Maine.

Assessing core professional engineering competencies varies by country. In the US, each state licensing board verifies that licensure candidates possess the required education, experience, and pass two national qualifying examinations. In the UK, under the oversight of the Engineering Council, each professional society uses a mentored process that includes reviews of experience and an ultimate oral examination/project review that is described as being similar to a thesis defense.

Building the trust necessary for the MRA required verification of the licensure standards and protocols of each country and recognition that they are substantially equivalent. By determining the substantial equivalency of qualifications, both countries continue to assure that the safety, welfare, and property of the public is protected.

To participate in the MRA, individual licensees must meet the requirements of their home jurisdiction and then enroll in the International Professional Engineers Register. Individuals on the international registers are deemed to be substantially equivalent in qualifications. US PEs who meet the requirements to be on the international roster can become Chartered Engineers in the UK. UK Chartered Engineers who meet the requirements to be on the international roster can become PEs in a US jurisdiction that adopts the MRA. Immigration and visa requirements are not impacted by the MRA.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions now or at the work session.