

From: [A Concerned Public Works Engineer](#)
To: [engineerboard \(DPL\)](#)
Subject: A concerning trend for the engineering profession in Massachusetts
Date: Sunday, December 17, 2023 5:12:33 PM

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to draw the Board's attention to an issue that I believe to be of grave concern for the engineering profession. I am a licensed professional engineer employed by a large multi-national consulting firm. I take pride in the positive contribution that my work makes to local communities and economies. What I am not proud of is the recent trend occurring within our industry to offshore engineering design and Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) work to wherever labor is cheapest (e.g. India). Until relatively recently, it was not practical to do this, but advances in computing technology have made it more feasible, and I am sad to say that it is now an industry trend.

Most multi-national engineering firms are now pursuing this strategy, and I believe that without strong regulatory intervention this "race to the bottom" will likely accelerate in the coming years. It is not hard to imagine the long-term ramifications of this strategy for the engineering profession. Projects will be primarily designed by engineers working in places like India for pennies on the dollar (in terms of the labor costs to the firm; the amount paid by the client is another matter). Once the design is done, it will be handed to a U.S.-based engineer licensed in the state the project is to be constructed in, who will be given a nominal amount of time to review the design and intense pressure from management to sign and seal it. Quality, public safety, and the reputation of the profession will all suffer, and the decline in demand for American engineering labor will drive down industry standards for wages and benefits, thereby exacerbating the current shortage of engineers.

I believe that the firms pursuing this strategy (including my employer) are focused on boosting the bottom line, with little regard for the integrity of the engineering profession or the safety of the public that depends on our work. This is precisely the sort of issue that state engineering boards were created to address. Accordingly, I strongly urge the Board to study the issue and consider rule changes to protect the profession and the public from this trend. The exact nature of those changes will vary by state (just like the rules governing the practice of engineering do), but might start with consideration of how the definition of the idea of "responsible charge" can be strengthened to preclude the scenario I describe above.

If the Board does take any action on this issue, I would very much appreciate hearing about it so that I can pass it on to other state boards that may be interested. Likewise, if there are any questions that I may assist with, please let me know and I will do my best to do so.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Public Works Engineer

P.S. - Regrettably, I must remain anonymous in order to reduce the likelihood of reprisals against me for sharing this information.

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