

2015.03.01

Council
APEGBC
4010 Regent Street, Suite 200
Burnaby, BC Canada V5C 6N2

Re: Proposed Act amendment to remove council members for bad behaviour

APEGBC council is promoting a vague Act amendment to remove persons from council who behave badly. Herein I will point to existing factors that may achieve the same goal by limiting authority and providing means to remove, give examples of bad behavior to differentiate, and explain how the amendment as written could be mis-used to the detriment of the profession.

Apparently a key motivation comes from examples of politicians who behaved badly, such as former Toronto mayor Rob Ford. However, **the context of authority and existing requirements for continuing to hold a position must be considered**, for each organization and position. Examples:

- What is the actual authority of a position? (Some mayors found that council could severely limit their activities. I expect professional financial persons and chief executives can as well. And the President of APEGBC may have more authority than councilors, thus merit a tougher rule.)
- Is there a requirement for good character? (Rob Ford and Marion Berry probably failed that, on both general grounds and for criminal activities.)
- Note the proposed amendment to remove persons from membership if mentally unfit might cover Rob Ford, who was obviously psychologically out of control.
- What is the period of office? (Now four years in BC municipalities, whereas APEGBC is much shorter albeit long enough to do damage if the office has substantial authority.)

What qualifies as unacceptable behaviour? Examples of lesser cases than Ford and Berry:

- I doubt if individual foolishness of inhaling marijuana is worth bothering about for engineering. (Whereas it'll prevent one from being hired as a police aviator.)
- An extra-marital affair, as a Saanich politician stupidly had, casts doubt on judgement and honesty but I don't see it as grounds for removal from APEGBC. Was lying to protect privacy of involved individuals grounds for removal from office? (However an affair within the organization or with influential consultants might, there was a case in the Victoria police department a few years ago.)

Keith H. Sketchley, P.Eng.

c/o 1 Adams Pl, #16 Victoria B.C. Canada V9B 6P6

250 - 216 - 3966

E-Mail keith.sketchley@ieee.org

- OTOH, the snooping into employee actions highlighted by that politician's discovery of what the former Chief Administrative Office had authorized in the computer network may be. (And may have violated BC's privacy law.)
- Politicking is bad, unfortunately most people have difficulty detecting it. I define it as misrepresentation of reality in order to obtain an unearned benefit, which may be psychological. I'd fire anyone who politicked.
- Someone who really yells and swears at someone is not behaving properly. Isn't there already protection against that? (Beware some claims are exaggerated, and see below.)
- Conflict of interest should be straightforward, there are some fine points to be handled.

Examples of how your proposed amendment could be abused include:

- A popular tactic today is claiming someone is not "being nice" for speaking out against something the accuser is promoting. That's an attempt to evade debate, by someone who subconsciously knows they cannot make a rational case for what they feel. Professional engineers are "not nice" every time they insist work be done correctly - how would council's proposed law amendment prevent that, given council's use of unprofessional survey methods? (I've had the "you're not a team player" variant used against me when I tried to coach a colleague on how to do testing correctly and efficiently.)
- A "can't we all get along now" rule was tried recently by a municipal council to suppress dissent. And there's MP Eve Adams' claim that the federal Conservative party has become "mean spirited" because it called her out on the way she tried to win the nomination for the next election. (The vocabulary of behavior-accusation scams is long, "collegiate atmosphere" was popular recently.)
- A certain belief set promotes an anti-human ideology which teaches knowledge methods that work against engineering. They like to smear questioners and lobby to exclude questioners from publications and forums. Many engineers believe teachings of the ideology, including some councilors over the years. (It is a hot debate, often getting deep into analysis methods including exotic statistics, adequacy of databases including coverage and custody, and methods of measuring small differences without contamination of data. Some councilors should consider whether or not their own promotion of programs based on it violates policy CG-6's requirements regarding advocacy and objectivity.)
- An "Oath" has been mis-used in several organizations, as a way of suppressing dissent. The slippery slope is defining actions as injurious to the organization, which is often interpreted in a politically correct way for expediency, whereas I can make a strong case that some programs of APEGBC are destructive to foundations of professional engineering thus violate the reason for APGBC's legislated existence. And some members believe that watering down vote thresholds to facilitate what they want is good for the

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profession, others believe it is injurious. A vague Act increases risk from a low threshold of member voting. (Note that item 1 of CG-6 is self-contradictory on advocacy.)

- In some cases confidentiality rules might limit proper action, a claim made for the second owner of the mall that collapsed in Elliot Lake Ontario and its relation to government.

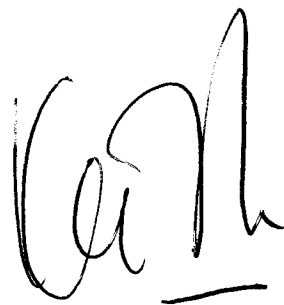
Professional engineers have a wide range of beliefs outside of the engineering compartment of their lives. In the political spectrum, both Mercantilists and Marxist forms of collectivism have been elected to council. (Persecution of agricultural scientists who objected to Lysenkoist nonsense in the USSR is an example of application of Marxist ideology. Observance of teachings was “politically correct” (a term coined by Lenin), resulting in more starvation.)

And we’ve recently seen blatant discrimination by a professional society in B.C. against views of a religion taught in a private university. Rather hypocritical given the number in that organization’s ranks of an ideology that is also supported only by faith – Marxism. (I don’t agree with either side.) It does seem they were collectively willing to go against the beliefs of many elected members of the current provincial government and its cabinet.)

I agree with the principle of removing for bad behaviour, IFF existing process actually do not cover the cases worthy of concern, but *object to a law so vague it can be abused to suppress earnest questioning of groupthink.* (Such as the “put your management hat on” pressure on the only engineer in the Morton Thiokol meeting which decided to recommend launch of a space shuttle in cold weather despite valid concerns by their staff about effectiveness of o-rings in booster rocket joints.)

Objective criteria are needed, rather than “felt” as used in APEGBC’s web page “Understanding the Proposed Amendments”.

I am very concerned that APEGBC council/committee members/staff have not done their homework on this issue and have not written in principles. **In my judgement the current direction of APEGBC council on this subject works against good management of the Association’s affairs, against Professional Engineering methodology, and against the public’s interest.**



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