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**ENGINEER WINS GROUNDBREAKING CASE AGAINST THE STATE OF WASHINGTON,  
ATTORNEY GENERAL BOB FERGUSON, AND THE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS**

**Seattle, Washington** – In a groundbreaking case in the Superior Court of Washington for Thurston County, Paul Tappel, a professional Civil Engineer, and his firm Fisheries Engineers, Inc. won a complete victory against The State of Washington, Attorney General Bob Ferguson, and the Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (“The Board”) that will benefit all registered engineers and the general public.

Mr. Tappel’s lawsuit complained that the Board and the Attorney General’s office were misinterpreting the law governing the registration of professional engineers and the State was allowing many employees to improperly use the title “Engineer” even though they were not licensed or registered as engineers.

RCW Chapter 18.43 (“the Act”) defines “engineer” to mean a “professional engineer” and provides in part that “In order to safeguard life, health, and property, and to promote the public welfare...it shall be unlawful for any person...to use in connection with his or her name or otherwise assume, use, or advertise any title or description tending to convey the impression that he or she is a professional engineer or land surveyor, unless such person has been duly registered under the provisions of this act.” Despite this and similar prohibitions elsewhere in the Act, the Board and Attorney General’s office did not interpret the Act as prohibiting the use of the title “Engineer” by unlicensed individuals and adopted a policy that most anyone could use the title “Engineer” as long as they did not use a few select specific titles (such as “Professional Engineer” or “Structural Engineer.”) But this left most other types of Engineer titles—Environmental Engineer, Bridge Engineer, Transportation Engineer, Chemical Engineer—completely unregulated. As a result, there are at least 800 State employees who are improperly using the title “Engineer”.

The title “Engineer” necessarily conveys the impression of licensure when it is being used by someone who offers engineering services, and therefore a certain confidence that the individual bearing that title is in fact a licensed engineer qualified under the laws of the state. This case exposed that, by the Attorney General’s own admission, hundreds of thousands of individuals in the state may be improperly using the title without official

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credentials and restores the Board's interpretation of the Act to preclude the use of the professional title "Engineer" by such unlicensed individuals.

The Court stated in its ruling that "As a licensed professional engineer, Petitioners Paul Tappel and his engineering firm Fisheries Engineers, Inc. have a recognized interest in ensuring that others in their profession abide by the same rules and requirements." The Court found that both the Board and the Attorney General's Office improperly interpreted the Act and adopted an enforcement policy that violates the Act. The Court further found that the State of Washington has violated the Act by advertising and providing "Engineer" titles to employees who are not duly licensed under the Act.

Tappel was represented by Alan Schuchman and Rochelle Doyea of Seattle law firm Cairncross & Hempelmann. This victory continues the firm's robust representation of design professionals.

This is a good result for licensed engineers who have fulfilled the educational, experience and testing requirements to secure their licenses and the right to use the professional title Engineer. In plain language, this ruling makes clear it is unlawful for an unlicensed person to use the title "Engineer" when doing so conveys or implies that he or she is a professional engineer.

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