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To: Diane Freeman; David Adams; Catherine Karakatsanis; Corneliu Chisu; David Euler; Bruce Clarida; Allen Jones; Roger Jones; David Spacek; Paul Ballantyne; Chris Taylor; Chong, Thomas (MOH); Denis Carlos; Roydon Fraser; Len King; Phil Maka; Colin Moore; Ishwar Bhatia; Santosh Gupta; Rick Hilton; Rebecca Huang; Bill Kossta; James Lee; Mary Long-Irwin; Chris Roney; Tarsem Lal Sharma; Rakesh Shreewastav; Martha Stauch

Subject: PEO Governance: Election of President

Dear Colleague:

I accept that many Councillors and others in PEO's volunteer leadership base are dissatisfied with both

- Some of the results of the Council elections in any given year, and
- The attitudes and behaviours of some Councillors.

I admit that I too have from time to time expressed frustration about these things, and not necessarily with respect to those in the office of President.

I do not, however, accept that

(i) Council has the moral authority to change a major aspect of PEO's governance like the method of electing the President without ratification by the membership at large in a referendum, or that

(ii) Electing the President by and from among Councillors instead of the membership at large would, in and of itself, result in a higher level of satisfaction with those elected.

I believe there are several conditions that need to be met in order for either the present system (of electing the President by and from among members at large) or the proposed system (of electing the President by and from among Councillors) to work better:

(a) Council must agree on, and agree to enforce, the role, responsibilities, authorities, and executive limitations of both the President and the CEO / Registrar. HRC did what I arrogantly believe was some good work on this during my term as Chair, and Council approved it, but it has been largely ignored since.

(b) We must make a serious commitment to leadership succession; so that in every election there is a slate of capable, electable candidates who understand and are committed to PEO's role / mandate and governance. The Central Election and Search Committee - which has this responsibility officially - has not been fulfilling the mandate we intended for it.

(c) Council does not become "politicized". Our friends in Quebec (OIQ - the only Canadian jurisdiction where the Council selects the President) report that their Council often becomes politicized, and I have seen this first hand. I have always thought one of

the strengths of our system when compared to public politics is that PEO Councillors tend to come to the table as individual contributors with their own honest views and an openness to be influenced by the debate, not as political party hacks towing a predetermined party line.

(d) We must provide better mechanisms (such as all-candidates meetings, town hall meetings, webcasts, weblogs, etc.) for members at large to participate in PEO's agenda setting and issue resolution activities. Otherwise, no matter how the President (or any Councillor) gets elected, there will be a disconnect between the Council and the membership.

In other words I think that we could accomplish a lot by working on improving our processes and systems within the current governance model.

So I am joining others within the volunteer leadership base in asking that, in your Tuesday afternoon meeting, you take a step back, undo the November 19th resolution to proceed without a referendum, and put this whole governance change on hold until we can achieve greater clarity and consensus on the problem(s) we are trying to solve and how any proposed change will contribute to solving it.

Let's apply the same disciplined engineering problem solving approach to own governance that we pride ourselves in applying in our day to day work. Then we can indeed take pride in our self governing profession.

I wish each of you a very happy holiday season, and all the best in 2011.

Thanks and best regards,

George

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Past President, Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) - 2004-2005