

The ASCE Task Committee on Engineering Review Procedures

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Prelude: Task Force on Engineering Reviews

The Honorable Sherwood L. Boehlert

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Former Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Building and Fire Research Laboratory

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Former President of the National Academy of Engineering

Charge: ***Examine the policies and procedures followed by the American Society of Civil Engineers in conducting engineering studies of natural and man-made disasters.*** Upon completion of this examination, produce a written report providing recommendations for improving the clarity, transparency and efficiency of the policies and procedures governing future engineering studies by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Prelude: Task Force on Engineering Reviews

Recommendations

- ASCE should develop a Manual of Engineering Review Procedures covering each phase of this process, ensuring the completeness of the final report and that steps safeguarding against conflicts of interest are followed. This manual should be available to all ASCE members and staff as well as the public.
- The committee selection process must be modified to ensure that assessment teams are comprised of members with appropriate expertise. The committee selection process should follow the identification of special expertise required for a specific study. Assessment teams should be assembled from a list of those possessing needed expertise.
- The committee selection process must be timely and open to the public. It must have provisions for looking beyond ASCE Membership to find needed expertise. A pre-approved inventory of potential assessment team members, listed by categories (areas of expertise) would be helpful in assuring a rapid response capability.
- The committee selection process needs formal procedures to assess potential or perceived conflicts of interests.
- The assessment teams need greater independence from ASCE with respect to staff oversight and communications with the public. It must be clear that ASCE headquarters staff facilitate and support the work assessment team.
- Assessment team findings should not have to be presented as a consensus report. If team members have findings upon which there is not consensus, these findings should be included in the final report as additional views - not minority views.

Complete report available on-line – Google: Boehlert report, ASCE

TCERP Committee Charge

The *Task Committee on Engineering Review Procedures* shall develop and recommend to the ASCE Board of Direction an operating manual that includes all polices, procedures, protocols and training requirements needed to implement the Task Force on Engineering Review Action Plan.

Timeline

- November 2008 – Committee Formed
- Current ~ 85% Draft of Manual
- June 2009 – Deliver approved manual to ASCE board

Purpose and Scope of Manual

Provide general guidance for the formation, function, and goals of ASCE post-disaster assessment teams

Pertains to both natural and human-caused disasters:

- earthquakes
- landslides
- floods
- hurricanes and tropical storms
- wind
- snow and ice
- tsunamis
- tornados
- wildfires
- power outages
- terrorism
- structural failures
- industrial, chemical, and biological events.

Anticipated Topics to be Addressed

Launching and funding an assessment

Selection of team leader and assessment team members

Schedule, staff support

Presentation and publication of team findings

Coordination with other organizations