Dakota Soda

From: Rock Dog <rock.dog.design@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 10:36 AM
To: Rep. Karl Bohnak (District 109)
Cc: Dakota Soda
Subject: Maintaining Public Trust and Professional Integrity in HB 4914

Dear Representative Bohnak,

My name is Ryan Morse, and I am a licensed architect and business owner based in Negaunee, Michigan. I work directly with other U.P. business owners to deliver projects that strengthen our communities, create local jobs, and safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the public we serve.

In addition to running my firm, I serve as an **NCARB Licensing Advisor**, an **NCARB Licensure Portfolio Reviewer**, an **AIA Strategic Councilor**, and a **former AIA Chapter President.** I have also successfully worked with the state legislature in Alaska to modernize licensing requirements—reforms that improved efficiency *without compromising public safety or professional integrity*.

I'm writing about **House Bill 4914**, which would remove the requirement that at least two-thirds of a firm's principals be licensed in architecture, engineering, or land surveying. While I appreciate the desire to reduce barriers for business formation, this particular change risks doing real harm to the profession and the public.

Why this matters:
When a design firm's leadership is primarily licensed professionals, the company is accountable to the same ethical and technical standards required of its individual licensees. That accountability protects clients, contractors, and taxpayers alike. If a majority of firm principals no longer need to be licensed, decision-making may shift toward business expedience rather than public protection.

Architecture, engineering, and surveying firms don't simply sell a service—they hold legal responsibility for the safety and performance of the built environment. Diluting the requirement for licensed leadership would weaken that professional chain of accountability and could erode the public trust that Michigan's regulatory framework has built over decades.

A better path forward:
If the goal is to help small firms compete and thrive, there are other solutions—streamlining corporate filings, easing administrative reporting to LARA, and aligning ownership rules with NCARB and AIA model guidelines—all without undermining the principle that *those in control of professional services should themselves be professionally accountable*.

As someone who values your dedication to local business vitality and pragmatic reform, I urge you to consider amendments that preserve the two-thirds licensed-leadership standard or at least establish strong safeguards to ensure that public health, safety, and welfare remain at the forefront of professional practice.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further—by phone or in person—at your convenience. Thank you for your continued service and for your thoughtful attention to the impact this bill could have on U.P. communities and Michigan's professional standards.

Respectfully,

Ryan Morse, AIA, NCARB
Rock Dog Design
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