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: Ensuring High Standards in HB 4913 — A Local Business Leader's Perspective

Dear Representative Bohnak,

Thank you for your service and your leadership as Vice Chair of the House Committee on Economic Competitiveness, representing the Upper Peninsula's 109th District.

My name is Ryan Morse, and I own and operate an architecture and design firm based in Negaunee, Michigan. I partner with other local business owners to develop projects that support our region's economy and communities in the U.P.

As a Michigan-trained architect and licensed professional, I serve the public in several key capacities: I am a current National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) Licensing Advisor, an NCARB portfolio reviewer, an active American Institute of Architects (AIA) Strategic Councillor, and a former AIA Chapter President who has worked with state legislatures—in Alaska—on licensing reform. I mention this so you can know I understand both the professional standards and the public protection role of architecture licensure.

I'm writing regarding House Bill 4913, the "Good Samaritan (Architect), Scope of Practice: Architect (Occupational Licensing Reform)" measure, of which you are a sponsor. While I share your interest in reducing unnecessary regulatory burden, I have serious concerns that the bill— in its current form—may compromise the high standards our profession must maintain for the protection of public health, safety and welfare.

Here are my key points:

- The bill proposes that a candidate for licensure may satisfy the requirement by completing a first professional degree (or further) or "the equivalent of a first professional degree." That "equivalent" language invites ambiguity and may lower the educational benchmark.
- The value of licensure lies in the rigorous combination of education, structured experience and comprehensive examination. NCARB's model is a proven pathway that preserves public protection while offering mobility.
- Reform efforts meant to reduce "red tape" must ensure we do not inadvertently reduce the quality, competency or accountability of practitioners. As neighbours in the U.P., we cannot accept shortcuts—our conditions (climate, geography, infrastructure) demand competence.
- Locally, as a small business owner, I manage not only design quality, but liability exposures, long-term durability, code compliance and the well-being of our communities. Lowering standards may lead to higher risk for building owners, taxpayers, contractors and local governments.

Given your background—decades in the U.P., close connection to our communities and a clear focus on local control and economic vitality—I respectfully ask you to consider the following amendments to HB 4913:

1. Clarify what "equivalent of a first professional degree" means in explicit terms (e.g., clearly defined number of credit hours, accredited program, or structured alternative with oversight - NCARB has model language to work from).
2. Retain meaningful supervised experience requirements, tied to tasks essential to protecting the public, rather than simply time served.
3. Preserve examination standards consistent with NCARB or equivalent national benchmark to ensure entry-level competency.
4. Ensure the governing Board retains oversight and authority to determine eligibility, scope and discipline to protect public welfare.

If you like, I would be glad to meet with you or your staff—either virtually or in person—to provide a local business owner's perspective on how licensing reform can succeed *without* lowering standards.

Thank you for your time and commitment to our region. I appreciate your willingness to review local voices as this bill moves forward, and I look forward to working together to keep the U.P. strong, safe and economically vibrant.

Sincerely,

Ryan Morse, AIA, NCARB
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