

**LOUISIANA PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING
AND LAND SURVEYING BOARD
9643 BROOKLINE AVENUE, SUITE 121
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70809-1443
(225) 925-6291**

IN THE MATTER OF:)	CASE NO. 2017-33
)	
HTS, INC., CONSULTANTS)	
)	
RESPONDENT)	
)	
)	
)	

CONSENT ORDER

The Louisiana Professional Engineering and Land Surveying Board [hereinafter the “Board”], by and through its Executive Director, pursuant to authorization by the Board, and HTS, Inc., Consultants [hereinafter “Respondent”], by and through its duly authorized undersigned representative, hereby agree to the following:

At all times material hereto, Respondent was licensed in the State of Louisiana as a professional engineering firm, number EF-4594.

An investigation was opened based upon the Board’s receipt of information and documents which suggested that Respondent may have committed violations of the Board’s laws and/or rules. The investigation disclosed that on September 17, 2012 the Louisiana Secretary of State revoked Respondent’s certificate of authority to transact business in Louisiana, and Respondent has not been in “good standing” with the Louisiana Secretary of State since that date.

On or about February 14, 2014, Respondent submitted to the Board its 2014 Louisiana professional engineering firm license renewal invoice, confirming thereon that **(a)** it was in “good standing” with the Louisiana Secretary of State, **(b)** all information provided in its renewal invoice was true and correct to the best of its knowledge, information and belief and **(c)** an omission or untrue response may constitute fraud, deceit, material misrepresentation, perjury or the giving of false or forged evidence under the Board’s licensure law.

The also investigation disclosed that in July 2015 the Oklahoma State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors [hereinafter “Oklahoma Board”] took disciplinary action against Respondent for practicing and/or offering to practice engineering without proper authorization. In a Consent Order dated July 16, 2015 in connection with Case No. 2015-010,

the Oklahoma Board assessed Respondent with an administrative penalty of \$750 and issued it a reprimand.

On or about March 15, 2016, Respondent submitted to the Board its 2016 Louisiana professional engineering firm license renewal invoice, confirming thereon that **(a)** it was in “good standing” with the Louisiana Secretary of State, **(b)** it had not been subject to disciplinary action by the licensing authority in another jurisdiction since its previous license renewal in 2014, **(c)** all information provided in its renewal invoice was true and correct to the best of its knowledge, information and belief and **(d)** an omission or untrue response may constitute fraud, deceit, material misrepresentation, perjury or the giving of false or forged evidence under the Board’s licensure law.

La. R.S. 37:698(A)(1) prohibits licensees from committing any fraud, deceit, material misstatement or perjury, or the giving of any false or forged evidence, in applying for a renewal license with the Board. La. R.S. 37:698(H) permits the Board to take disciplinary action against persons who violate La. R.S. 37:698(A)(1), upon a finding of guilt following the preferral of charges, notice and hearing and a majority vote of its entire membership authorized to participate in the proceeding. La. R.S. 37:698(A)(1) and La. R.S. 37:698(H) were in effect at all times material hereto.

It is undisputed that **(a)** on September 17, 2012 the Louisiana Secretary of State revoked Respondent’s certificate of authority to transact business in Louisiana, and Respondent has not been in “good standing” with the Louisiana Secretary of State since that date, **(b)** on or about February 14, 2014 Respondent falsely stated on its 2014 Louisiana professional engineering firm license renewal invoice that it was in “good standing” with the Louisiana Secretary of State, **(c)** in July 2015 Respondent was subject to disciplinary action by the licensing authority in another jurisdiction and **(d)** on or about March 15, 2016 Respondent falsely stated on its 2016 Louisiana professional engineering firm license renewal invoice that it was in “good standing” with the Louisiana Secretary of State and that it had not been subject to disciplinary action by the licensing authority in another jurisdiction since its previous license renewal in 2014.

By letter dated August 30, 2017, the Board gave notice to Respondent that it was considering the preferral of charges against Respondent on the grounds that Respondent may

have violated La. R.S. 37:698(A)(1), relative to fraud, deceit, material misstatement or perjury, or the giving of any false or forged evidence, in applying for a renewal license with the Board.

Wishing to dispense with the need for further disciplinary action and to conclude the instant proceeding without further delay and expense, for the purpose of this proceeding only, Respondent and the Board do hereby enter into this Consent Order, in which Respondent of its own free will consents to the issuance of a Consent Order by the Board, wherein Respondent agrees to **(a)** pay a fine of one thousand and no/100 (\$1,000.00) dollars; **(b)** pay administrative costs of eight hundred sixty-six and 60/100 (\$866.60) dollars; **(c)** have its supervising professional successfully complete the Board's online Louisiana Laws and Rules Quiz; **(d)** have its supervising professional successfully complete the Board's online Louisiana Professionalism and Ethics Quiz; **(e)** have its certificate of authority to transact business in Louisiana reinstated by the Louisiana Secretary of State and thereafter be in "good standing" with the Louisiana Secretary of State; **(f)** the immediate suspension of its Louisiana professional engineering firm license if it fails to comply with any portion of this Consent Order, with said suspension continuing until it so complies; and **(g)** the publication of this Consent Order on the Board's website and a summary of this matter in the Board's official journal, the *Louisiana Engineer and Surveyor Journal*, and the reporting of this matter to the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), identifying Respondent by name.

Respondent admits that its conduct as set forth above constitutes violations of the above referenced laws and/or rules as stated herein. Respondent acknowledges awareness of said laws and/or rules and states that it will comply with all applicable laws and rules henceforth. Respondent has been advised of its right to be represented by counsel before the Board and/or to appear at any hearing personally or by counsel and present witnesses and evidence in its own behalf, it hereby waives this right and its right to appeal, and it states affirmatively that it has been afforded all administrative remedies due it under the law. Respondent further acknowledges awareness of the fact that the signed original of this Consent Order will remain in the custody of the Board as a public record and will be made available for public inspection and copying upon request.

Therefore, in consideration of the foregoing and by signing this Consent Order, Respondent does hereby waive its right to a hearing before the Board, to the presenting of

evidence and witnesses on its behalf, to Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in this case, and to judicial review of this Consent Order.

Respondent hereby represents that **(a)** it fully understands the meaning and intent of this Consent Order, including but not limited to its final and binding effect, **(b)** it has voluntarily entered into this Consent Order and that no other promise or agreement of any kind has been made to or with it by any person whatsoever to cause the execution of this instrument and **(c)** the sanctions set forth in this Consent Order do not prevent the Board from taking further disciplinary or enforcement action against Respondent on matters not specifically addressed in this Consent Order.

WHEREFORE, the Louisiana Professional Engineering and Land Surveying Board and Respondent agree that:

1. Respondent shall pay a fine of one thousand and no/100 (\$1,000.00) dollars, which shall be tendered to the Board by certified check payable to the Board, due upon the signing of this Consent Order; and
2. Respondent shall pay administrative costs of eight hundred sixty-six and 60/100 (\$866.60) dollars, which shall be tendered to the Board by certified check payable to the Board, due upon the signing of this Consent Order; and
3. Respondent shall have its supervising professional successfully complete the Board's online Louisiana Laws and Rules Quiz with a score of 90% or higher and return it to the Board within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this Consent Order; and
4. Respondent shall have its supervising professional successfully complete the Board's online Louisiana Professionalism and Ethics Quiz with a score of 90% or higher and return it to the Board within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this Consent Order; and
5. Respondent shall, within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Consent Order, have its certificate of authority to transact business in Louisiana reinstated by the Louisiana Secretary of State and thereafter be in "good standing" with the Louisiana Secretary of State; and
6. Respondent's Louisiana professional engineering firm license, number EF-4594, shall be immediately suspended if it fails to comply with any portion of this Consent Order, with said suspension continuing until it so complies; and

7. This Consent Order shall be published on the Board's website and a summary of this matter shall be printed in the official journal of the Board, the *Louisiana Engineer and Surveyor Journal*, and reported to the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), identifying Respondent by name; and

8. This Consent Order shall not become effective unless and until it is accepted and signed by and on behalf of the Board. Should the Board not accept and sign this Consent Order, it is agreed that presentation of this matter to the Board shall not prejudice the Board or any of its members, staff, attorneys or representatives from further participation, consideration, or resolution of any further proceedings herein.

LOUISIANA PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING
AND LAND SURVEYING BOARD

DATE: 13 Nov. 2017

BY: Donna D. Sentell
DONNA D. SENTELL, Executive Director

HTS, INC., CONSULTANTS, Respondent

DATE: 10-4-17

BY: Bobby D. Morrison
BOBBY D. MORRISON, P.E., Chief Executive Officer

Witnesses to the signature of
HTS, Inc., Consultants

John Teepito
Print Name: John Teepito

Tina Hutchins
Print Name: Tina Hutchins