

LOS ANGELES SECTION

PE PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS
CG IN CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT

SECTION QUARTERLY REPORT

March 2022

Section Officers

Shabbir Ahmed, CT
Senior TE Specialist
President

Refugio Dominguez, CT
Senior TE Supervisor
Director

Edward Jackson, DGS
Fire and Life Safety
Officer II
President-Elect

Mercedes Merino, CT
Engineering Geologist
Range D
VP Rank & File

Henry Jones, CT
Senior Engineering
Geologist Supervisor
VP Supervisory

Samuel Luk, DGS
Senior Architect
VP At-Large

Fouad Dagher, CT
Senior TE Specialist
Treasurer

Varoujan Jinbanchian,
CPUC Senior Utilities
Engineer
Secretary

Section Events Overview

Los Angeles (LA) Section Officers, delegates and members would like to welcome all Corporate, Section leaders, Committee Chairs/members, and Staff to the March 2022 Board of Directors Meeting.

As we keep treading into this new year, and as the largest Section of this great organization, we are constantly challenging and striving to challenge ourselves to be more effective in conducting our affairs and serving the vast and diverse Caltrans and At-large PECG membership. Fifty LA Section officers and delegates constitute the Los Angeles Section Executive Committee (EC), which represents a total of 1750 Section members strong. Over the years LA Section has been actively involved in recruiting and retaining its members, political outreach and fund-raising events, and outreach in partnership with multiple State Departments and external entities, Science and Engineering Fairs, Goodwill efforts, etc. To serve our membership holistically, the officers and delegates must uphold higher ethical standards and, as a team, continue to be more accountable and transparent on how our Section functions and conducts its business. We are also recruiting new EC members who will adequately represent a diverse cross-section of our membership. We encourage this new generation of members to bring forth issues that are important to them as we move into the future, knowing they will be our next generation of Section and Corporate leaders.

LA Section Membership Dashboard (current as of February 2022):

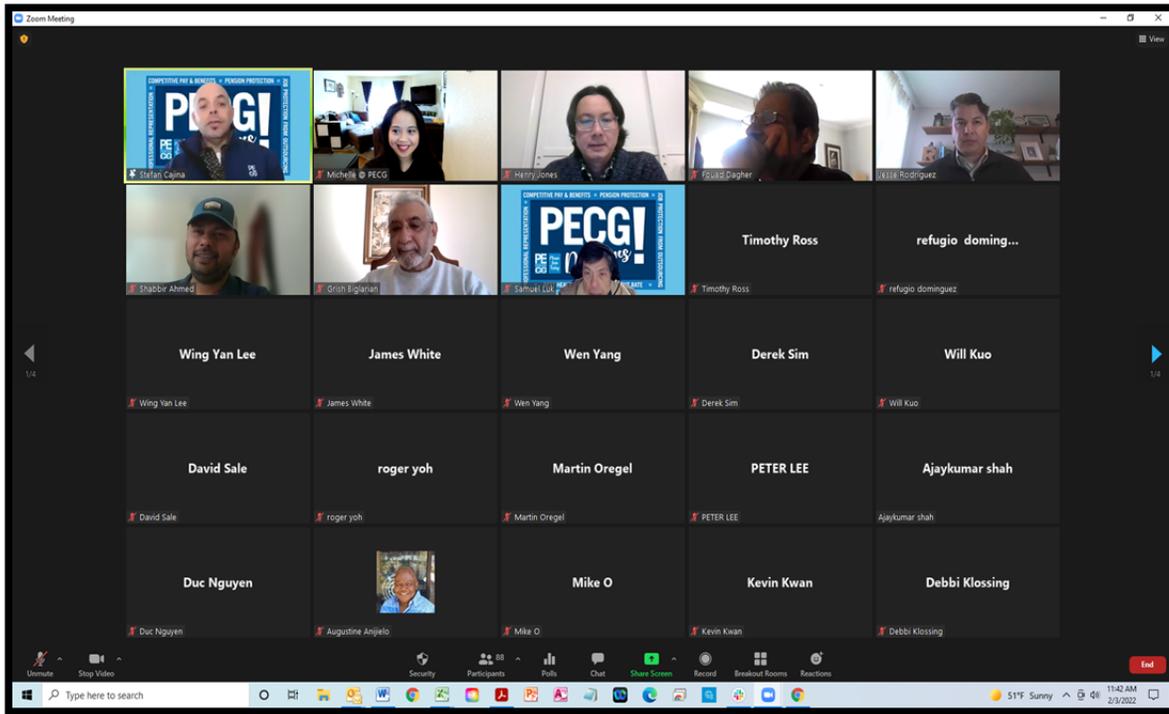
As the largest Section in the organization with 1,750 members, here are some fun facts:

- LA Section has 89% total Rank and File Membership – **highest in the State**
- LA Section has 66% total Supervisory and Managerial Membership
- LA Section has 123 Fed-PAC Members, 43% plus of total membership - **highest in the State**



Section Supervisory and Managerial Meeting – February 3, 2022:

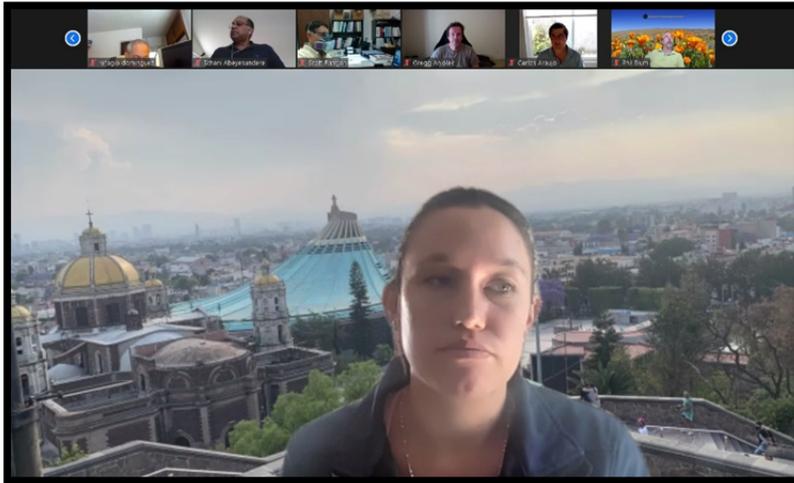
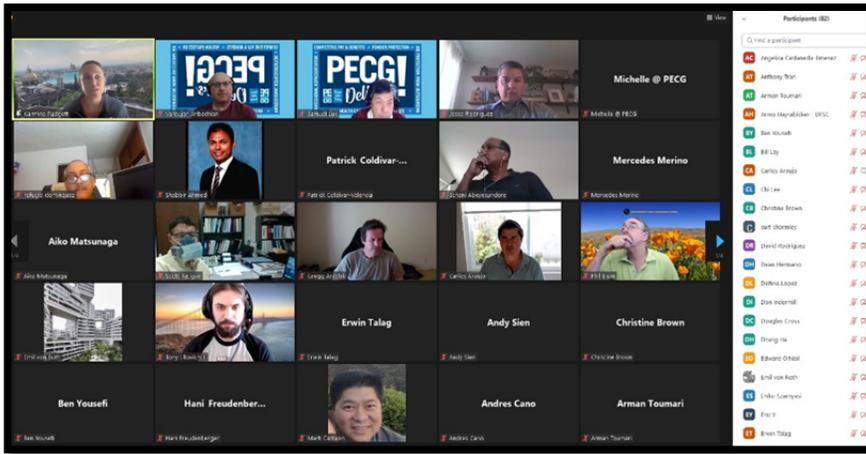
The Section also hosted an exclusive Supervisory and Managerial meeting to discuss issues directly related to them. Henry Jones, LA Section Vice President Supervisory presided over this meeting, and we were honored to have Corporate Vice President Supervisory, Stefan Cajina as the keynote speaker. There were **135 attendees** at this meeting who actively participated with their questions, concerns, and comments. Stefan and Henry did an excellent job in addressing the membership's queries. Jesse Rodriguez, PEGG legal counsel out of the Pasadena office also offered his insights and answered questions that were pertinent to him. Michelle Manawis again helped us host and plan this meeting.



Thank you Mr. VP Supervisory!!

Section At-Large Meeting – February 10, 2022:

Very often, issues specific to At-large (Non-Caltrans) Departments go unnoticed. This year, the LA Section is focusing on actively involving the At-large membership so that their concerns can be addressed. At-large membership constitutes a substantial portion of the Section’s membership. Samuel Luk, LA Section Vice President At-Large presided over this meeting, and we were honored to have Corporate Vice President At-Large, Karmina Padgett-Gonzalez as the keynote speaker. We had yet another successful Section event with **140 attendees** at this meeting. Jesse Rodriguez, PEGG legal counsel out of the Pasadena office also gave a very detailed overview of the major events that are relevant to the Section and provided his input on many questions that were raised at this meeting. And yes, Michelle Manawis yet again helped us host and plan this meeting – thank you Michelle! 😊



Thank you Madam VP At-Large!!



Section Fed-PAC Membership Meeting (date pending Mid-March 2022):

Due to its dominant Fed-PAC membership presence in PECG, LA Section holds an exclusive Fed-PAC members meeting. However, schedule conflicts and logistical issues have delayed the Fed-PAC membership meeting until sometime in the middle of this month. Normally an elected official from Congress is invited to this meeting as a keynote speaker. Nadine Wescott, HQ PECG Staff, assisted us booking our Keynote Speaker at this event, US Representative **Julia Brownley** (California's 26th congressional district since 2013).

Below is a summary of Ms. Brown's accomplishments from her website:



After working in the private sector, Julia entered public service because she wanted to help local children receive the high-quality education they deserve. Following her service on her local school board, she was elected to the California State Assembly, where she served as Chairwoman of the Committee on Education.

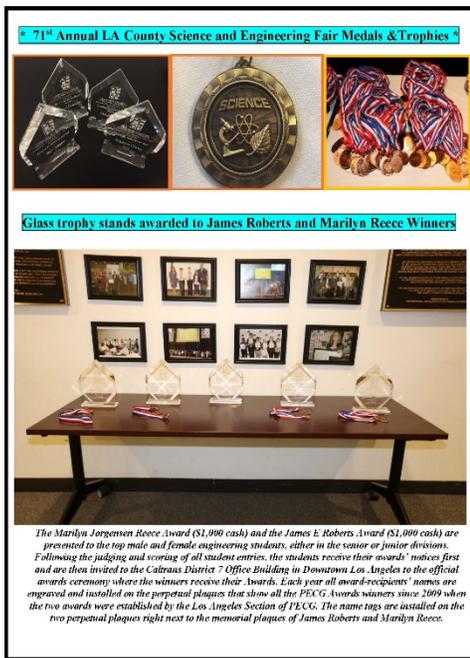
Julia was elected to Congress in 2012 and has been focusing on the issues important to Ventura County families — increasing opportunities for middle-class families, bringing down healthcare costs, making higher education more affordable, preserving and protecting our environment, making sure our veterans receive the services they deserve, protecting Social Security and Medicare, and ensuring equality for all.

As the leading Democrat on the Veterans' Affairs Health Subcommittee, Julia worked with local stakeholders to get a bill signed into law that will expand our local veterans community clinic by nearly seven times its original size — as well as to increase the number of healthcare providers and the breadth of services available to our veterans. As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, she was able to pass a surface transportation bill that will provide more funds to invest in our crumbling infrastructure. She has also been a consistent advocate for women and working families, including fighting to close the wage gap, raise the minimum wage, and expand job training and education assistance.

Julia is committed to staying above the partisan gridlock in Washington, and she has a strong record of working with both Democrats and Republicans to get things done for Ventura County. Some of her bills signed into law with bipartisan support include legislation to make an Oxnard veteran eligible to receive the Medal of Honor, evaluate which suicide prevention and mental health programs best serve women veterans, help more veterans succeed in the job market after their service, and ensure equitable funding for the Port of Hueneme.

She has consistently delivered for Ventura County, including helping more than 6,000 constituents with casework and returning more than \$16 million in benefits owed to Ventura County residents.

72nd Annual LA County Science & Engineering Fair – March 16 & 17, 2022:



The LA Section is continuing its decade-long tradition of involvement with the annual planning of the LA County Science and Engineering Fair (LACSF). We have a seat on the executive board and provide volunteers for judging and selecting projects for the PECG (James Roberts & Marilyn Reece) Annual Special Awards. The 72nd Annual LACSF will be held in March 2022. Following the announcement of the Special Award Winners, the students will be invited to the Caltrans D7 Office Building to receive their (\$1000 each) prizes, glass trophies, medals and certificates. At the end of the ceremony the students will be photographed, and their name tags will be posted on the two perpetual plaques next to James Roberts and Marilyn Reece Memorial commemorations. At this time due to Covid-19 CDC guidelines and for the safety of the students and the public at large, the 2022 fair is planned to be held virtually but nevertheless it is expected to be wellattended and successful.

The PECG LA Section thanks John Vassiliades for being on the LA County Science and Engineering Board as a trustee for over a decade, and for coordinating with Section membership and Caltrans Management, and planning and organizing this great outreach effort!

The email reminder below was recently sent to Section membership to solicit volunteers.



This is a reminder that **volunteer judges are needed for the 72nd Annual Los Angeles County Science and Engineering Fair**, scheduled for March 16 to 20, 2022. **Virtual judging will take place March 16 and 17, 2022.** *Those who serve as judges will be recognized with a certificate of appreciation along with a gift from the PECG Los Angeles Section!* Volunteer registration is closing soon, please sign up today!

The Los Angeles County Science and Engineering Fair (LACSEF) provides the opportunity for students from public, private, and parochial schools to showcase their projects and compete for prizes, scholarships, and other awards. These students represent some of the brightest in LA County, competing in 36 categories ranging from chemistry and biology to physics, engineering applications, and environmental management. This is a rewarding outreach experience for state engineers and related professionals who participate as student mentors.

Volunteer judges help determine category winners as well as those who will represent the LACSEF at the California State Science Fair and the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). LACSEF winners receive medals, cash, awards, and/or scholarships. Included in the LACSEF awards are the [James E. Roberts and Marilyn J. Reece special recognitions](#) presented each year by the PEGC LA Section Special Awards judges. Your participation as a judge truly makes a difference in the lives of students and shapes the engineers and scientists of tomorrow!

[Click here for details and instructions on how to register online.](#) Judges will be selected after each applicant is reviewed academically by the LACSEF Committee.

PEGC's MOU [Article 5.11](#) provides Mentoring Leave for participating in activities such as LACSEF. Those who sign up to help must seek prior approval by their supervisors in order to use state-approved Mentoring Leave.

Once the Online Registration is closed, you will receive a notification for your assigned category of competition along with the judging instructions.

If you have any questions, please contact John Vassiliades at john.vassiliades@dot.ca.gov or (213) 266-6572.

Also, Caltrans D07 Management supports this effort as stated in this email, which was sent to all employees past month:

From D07 Caltrans District Director Tony Tavares:

Join us at the 72nd Annual (virtual) LA County Science & Engineering Fair on March 16 & 17, 2022!

I encourage you all to take part and help inspire young minds to reach their aspirations by volunteering as a science fair student judge at the 72nd [Los Angeles County Science and Engineering Fair](#) (LACSEF) scheduled for March 16 & 17, 2022. We expect hundreds of 6th through 12th grade students from Los Angeles County public, parochial, and private schools to participate in the Science Fair.

Judging will be done virtually using a software called Rocket Judge, so Judges must have access to a monitor in order to view the project entries and be able to interview the students online. All registered Judges will get access to the virtual project submissions on March 11th, 2022 and will be able to view and evaluate those pieces prior to interviewing students on March 16th **or** March 17th. Judge orientation will begin both days at 8:00 AM. After orientation is over, judges will have the opportunity to meet with each other in their assigned category's virtual breakout rooms before interviewing students. Student interviews will begin at 9:00 AM. The judging day will finish by 3:30 PM. Student interviews will end by 2:30 PM with time for judge deliberations after.

Registration is mandatory in order to receive a final confirmation and a link for attending the virtual fair. Judging will commence on Wednesday, March 16 for all Physical Science categories, which include Engineering Applications, Engineering Research, Environmental Management, Physics, Chemistry, etc. Judging will continue on Thursday, March 17, for Life Sciences categories, which include Microbiology, Pharmacology, Animal Biology, Human Behavioral Sciences, etc. Judging for the Special Awards will commence on Friday, March 16 and conclude on March 18 if necessary.

To register as a judge at the registration website: www.lascifair.org click on the “How to Help” tab and then select “Be a Judge”. The directions and a link to the registration site will be on that page. You will need to “register a new account” when you are on our registration site home page.

District 7 has been partnering with the LACSF since 2007. Engineers from Caltrans and other state agencies serve as judges on more than 36 different categories of competition, ranging from chemistry and biology, to physics, engineering applications and environmental management. The top students, that you will help select, will compete at the California State Science Fair held virtually in April 2022 as well as at the [International Science Fair](#) the premier global competition where students share up to \$5 million in awards, or are selected for scholarships at prestigious universities. Included in the LACSF awards are the *James E. Roberts* and *Marilyn J. Reece* special recognitions presented each year by the Caltrans Special Awards judges. If interested in serving as a special awards judge to help select the Marilyn Reece and James Roberts 2022 winners, please contact John.Vassiliades@dot.ca.gov or 213-266-6572.

I encourage you to consider this and use your [Mentoring Leave](#) time (up to 40 hours per year; please check your bargaining contract). This is an immensely satisfying effort.



Monthly Section Executive Committee (EC) Meetings:

Our 50-member strong Executive Committee, which consists of Section officers and delegates, meets monthly. Jesse Rodriguez, PEGC Staff and Legal Counsel provides updates and discusses major issues with the EC. Robert's rules of conduct and all formalities are adhered to during these meetings. EC formally approves the Meeting Minutes prepared by the Section Secretary, Varoujan Jinbajian from the past meeting, and approves the latest treasury report prepared by the Section Treasurer, Fouad Dagher. All Motions Agenda is presented to the EC prior to the meeting for their review. Motions are voted on per the current By-laws and Policy File, and any deviations from this is voted by the EC Quorum with a 2/3 majority vote to supersede the minimum criteria.

New Employee Orientation (NEO) and Save Opportunity:

Section officers have been involved with Caltrans scheduled New Employee Orientation (NEO) meetings and save opportunities, which contact members who may be inclined to drop their PEGC affiliation. The LA Section, being one of the largest Sections in the State but with no more Section officers, requires a great deal

of our leaders' time and effort to meet its members' needs. The NEO meetings are scheduled twice a month. Brandon Cheathon, PEGC Staff assists the Department in scheduling these meetings with Section volunteers. Kudos to all the volunteering officers (Md, John, Henry, Refugio, Ed, Sam & Varoujan) who have stepped up to this challenging task!

Section By-Laws and Policy File Updates:

Very often, Sections tend to neglect to periodically update their By-Laws and Policy files. Over time, how we conduct Section business needs to be questioned, improved, and updated, and sure enough we as a Section are challenging our process this year. Varoujan Jinbachian, Section Secretary and Chair of this committee, Section President Shabbir Ahmed, and PEGC Staff and Legal Counsel are revising those documents with incremental approvals from the EC. The changes have been categorized in three (3) tiers – non-controversial, requiring discussion, and controversial.

Update: The first two tiers (non-controversial and 'requiring discussion') of the Section By-laws and Policy File have now been approved by the Executive Committee. The By-laws committee is preparing to present the 'controversial' items to the EC to be discussed very soon.

Section Committee Appointments and Active Delegate Participation:

Being a Section Officer or a Delegate without active participation does not serve our membership adequately. A namesake title may sound impressive but does not hold any value unless it's put into action. This year we will continue to make strides in getting the EC more involved in Section Committees and activities. As the year progresses, we may add on more Ad-Hoc committees as needed. Some of the committees being proposed this year are the following and the Chairs currently assigned to them.

- Policy and Bylaws – Varoujan Jinbachian
- Outreach, Awards, Events coordinator – Vacant
- Information Technology (website, quarterly reports, etc.) coordinator – Shabbir Ahmed
- Nominating and Elections – Edward Jackson
- Membership Committee –
 - i. Rank & File (Caltrans) – Md R Bhuyian
 - ii. Rank & File (At-Large) – Samuel Luk
 - iii. Supervisors (Caltrans) – Refugio Dominguez
 - iv. Supervisors (At-Large) – Henry Jones
- Corporate PEGC PAC Trustee/ Science and Engineering Fair – John Vassiliades

Informational Technology and Section Merchandize:

With most of us teleworking and conducting meetings online, we have come to depend more on the technology to keep us connected, share ideas, and collaborate with each other for business. The Section is considering on how some of the new technological tools can assist being more effective and connected with its members. With the help of PEGC Staff, a Section website with a more modern look and a new logo is being developed. The draft version of the website and the logo will be presented to the Executive Committee shortly. We may also make this a fun event with the membership to vote on their favorite versions of both the website and the logo and perhaps offer some incentive prizes. Once the logo is finalized, we will work on imprinting them on Section merchandize and clothing as potential giveaways.