### **BEFORE THE**

# BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS, AND GEOLOGISTS DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Accusation against:	)
RODRIGO SANTOS 118 Chattanooga Street San Francisco, CA 94114  Civil Engineer License, No. C 37153, Structural Engineer License, No. S 2984	) Case No. 1265-A ) ) ) ) )
Respondent.  DEC	
The attached Stipulated Surrende	er and Disciplinary Order is hereby adopted by the
Board for Professional Engineers, Land Survey	ors, and Geologists as its Decision in the above-
entitled matter.	
This Decision shall become effect	etive on <u>September 30, 2023</u>
IT IS SO ORDERED	ly 27, 2023

Original Signed

BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS, AND GEOLOGISTS Department of Consumer Affairs State of California

1	ROB BONTA	
2	Attorney General of California DIANN SOKOLOFF	
3	Supervising Deputy Attorney General JULIANNE MOSSLER	
4	Deputy Attorney General State Bar No. 243749	
5	1515 Clay Street, 20th Floor P.O. Box 70550	
6	Oakland, CA 94612-0550 Telephone: (510) 879-1349	
7	Facsimile: (510) 622-2270 E-mail: Julianne.Mossler@doj.ca.gov	
8	Attorneys for Complainant	
9	REFOR	
10	BEFOR BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENG	INEERS, LAND SURVEYORS, AND
11	GEOLO DEPARTMENT OF CO	
12	STATE OF CA	ALIFORNIA
13	In the Matter of the Accusation Against:	Case No. 1265-A
14	RODRIGO SANTOS	OAH No. 2023020473
15	118 Chattanooga Street San Francisco, California 94114	STIPULATED SURRENDER OF
16	Civil Engineer License No. C 37153	LICENSE AND ORDER
17	Structural Engineer License No. S 2984	
18	Respondent.	
19		
20	IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED AND AGR	EED by and between the parties to the above-
21	entitled proceedings that the following matters are	•
22	PART	<u> TIES</u>
23	Richard B. Moore, PLS (Complainant)	e) is the Executive Officer of the Board for
24	Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geo	logists (Board). He brought this action solely in
25	his official capacity and is represented in this mat	ter by Rob Bonta, Attorney General of the State
26	of California, by Julianne Mossler, Deputy Attorn	ey General.
27	2. Rodrigo Santos (Respondent) is repre-	sented in this proceeding by attorney Randall G.
28	Knox, whose address is: 870 Market Street, Ste. 8	20, San Francisco, CA 94102.

- 3. On or about July 22, 1983, the Board issued Civil Engineer License No. C 37153 to Respondent. The Civil Engineer License was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought in Accusation No. 1265-A and will expire on June 30, 2024, unless renewed.
- 4. On or about February 27, 1987, the Board issued Structural Engineer License No. S 2984 to Respondent. The Structural Engineer License was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought in Accusation No. 1265-A and will expire on June 30, 2024, unless renewed.

#### **JURISDICTION**

5. Accusation No. 1265-A was filed before the Board, and is currently pending against Respondent. The Accusation and all other statutorily required documents were properly served on Respondent on January 31, 2023. Respondent timely filed his Notice of Defense contesting the Accusation. A copy of Accusation No. 1265-A is attached as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference.

# ADVISEMENT AND WAIVERS

- 6. Respondent has carefully read, fully discussed with counsel, and understands the charges and allegations in Accusation No. 1265-A. Respondent also has carefully read, fully discussed with counsel, and understands the effects of this Stipulated Surrender of License and Order.
- 7. Respondent is fully aware of his legal rights in this matter, including the right to a hearing on the charges and allegations in the Accusation; the right to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against him; the right to present evidence and to testify on his own behalf; the right to the issuance of subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents; the right to reconsideration and court review of an adverse decision; and all other rights accorded by the California Administrative Procedure Act and other applicable laws.
- 8. Respondent voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently waives and gives up each and every right set forth above.

#### **CULPABILITY**

9. Respondent admits the truth of each and every charge and allegation in Accusation

No. 1265-A, agrees that cause exists for discipline and surrenders his Civil Engineer License No. C 37153 for the Board's formal acceptance.

- 10. Respondent admits the truth of each and every charge and allegation in Accusation No. 1265-A, agrees that cause exists for discipline and surrenders his Structural Engineer License No. S 2984 for the Board's formal acceptance.
- 11. Respondent understands that by signing this stipulation he enables the Board to issue an order accepting the surrender of his Civil Engineer License without further process.
- 12. Respondent understands that by signing this stipulation he enables the Board to issue an order accepting the surrender of his Structural Engineer License No. S 2984 without further process.

#### CONTINGENCY

- 13. This stipulation shall be subject to approval by the Board. Respondent understands and agrees that counsel for Complainant and the staff of the Board may communicate directly with the Board regarding this stipulation and surrender, without notice to or participation by Respondent or his counsel. By signing the stipulation, Respondent understands and agrees that he may not withdraw his agreement or seek to rescind the stipulation prior to the time the Board considers and acts upon it. If the Board fails to adopt this stipulation as its Decision and Order, the Stipulated Surrender and Disciplinary Order shall be of no force or effect, except for this paragraph, it shall be inadmissible in any legal action between the parties, and the Board shall not be disqualified from further action by having considered this matter.
- 14. The parties understand and agree that Portable Document Format (PDF) and facsimile copies of this Stipulated Surrender of License and Order, including PDF and facsimile signatures thereto, shall have the same force and effect as the originals.
- 15. This Stipulated Surrender of License and Order is intended by the parties to be an integrated writing representing the complete, final, and exclusive embodiment of their agreement. It supersedes any and all prior or contemporaneous agreements, understandings, discussions, negotiations, and commitments (written or oral). This Stipulated Surrender of License and Order may not be altered, amended, modified, supplemented, or otherwise changed except by a writing

executed by an authorized representative of each of the parties.

16. In consideration of the foregoing admissions and stipulations, the parties agree that the Board may, without further notice or formal proceeding, issue and enter the following Order:

#### **ORDER**

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Civil Engineer License No. C 37153, and Structural Engineer License No. S 2984 issued to Respondent Rodrigo Santos, are surrendered and accepted by the Board. The Decision becomes effective on September 30, 2023.

- 1. Respondent hereby freely and voluntarily surrenders his Civil Engineer License, No. C 37153 and Structural Engineer License, No. S 2984. This voluntary surrender shall be deemed a disciplinary action which shall become part of respondent's license history with the Board.
- 2. Respondent shall lose all rights and privileges as a civil engineer and a structural engineer in California as of the effective date of the decision of the Board adopting this stipulation, including the right to use any of the restricted titles associated with his licenses.
- 3. Respondent shall cause to be delivered to the Board the pocket identification card(s) and wall certificates for these licenses on or before the effective date of the decision of the Board adopting this stipulation.
- 4. Respondent agrees not to petition for reinstatement of the surrendered licenses.

  Respondent agrees not to apply for any license issued by the Board for three years from the effective date of this surrender. Respondent understands and agrees that if he ever applies for any license issued by the Board, the Board shall treat it as a new application for licensure.

  Respondent must comply with all the laws, regulations, and procedures for licensure in effect at the time the application is filed, including but not limited to submitting a completed application and the requisite fee and taking and passing the required examination(s), and all of the charges and allegations contained in the Accusation shall be deemed to be true, correct, and admitted by Respondent when the licensing agency determines whether to grant or deny the application.

#### **ACCEPTANCE**

I have carefully read the above Stipulated Surrender of License and Order and have fully discussed it with my attorney Randall G. Knox. I understand the stipulation and the effect it will

1	have on my Civil Engineer License and Structural Engineer License. I enter into this Stipulated
2	Surrender of License and Order voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently, and agree to be bound
3	by the Decision and Order of the Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and
4	Geologists.
5	DATED: JVLY 19, 2023 Original Signed RODRIGO SANTOS Respondent
6	DATED: JVLY 1 2023 OT TOTALL STOPLECUP
7	RODIGO SAJATOS  Respondent
8	I have read and fully discussed with Respondent Rodrigo Santos the terms and conditions
9	and other matters contained in this Stipulated Surrender of License and Order. I approve its form
10	and content.
11	and content.  DATED: 7/10/23 Original Signed  RANDALL G. KNOX
12	Attorney for Respondent
13	ENDORSEMENT
14	The foregoing Stipulated Surrender of License and Order is hereby respectfully submitted
15 16	for consideration by the Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists of the
17	Department of Consumer Affairs.
1,	
18	DATED: $7/10/2023$ Respectfully submitted,
18 19	ROB BONTA
18 19 20	ROB BONTA Attorney General of California DIANN SOKOLOFF
19	ROB BONTA Attorney General of California DIANN SOKOLOFF Supervising Deputy Attorney General
19 20	ROB BONTA Attorney General of California DIANN SOKOLOFF
19 20 21	ROB BONTA Attorney General of California DIANN SOKOLOFF Supervising Deputy Attorney General  Original Signed  JULIANNE MOSSLER Deputy Attorney General
19 20 21 22	ROB BONTA Attorney General of California DIANN SOKOLOFF Supervising Deputy Attorney General Original Signed
19 20 21 22 23	ROB BONTA Attorney General of California DIANN SOKOLOFF Supervising Deputy Attorney General  Original Signed  JULIANNE MOSSLER Deputy Attorney General
19 20 21 22 23 24	ROB BONTA Attorney General of California DIANN SOKOLOFF Supervising Deputy Attorney General  Original Signed  JULIANNE MOSSLER Deputy Attorney General  Attorneys for Complainant
19 20 21 22 22 23 24	ROB BONTA Attorney General of California DIANN SOKOLOFF Supervising Deputy Attorney General  Original Signed  JULIANNE MOSSLER Deputy Attorney General

# Exhibit A

Accusation No. 1265-A

1	ROB BONTA	
2	Attorney General of California	
3	Supervising Deputy Attorney General JULIANNE MOSSLER	
4	Deputy Attorney General State Bar No. 243749	
5	1515 Clay Street, 20th Floor P.O. Box 70550	
6	Oakland, CA 94612-0550	
7	Telephone: (510) 879-1349 Facsimile: (510) 622-2270 Facsili, Inliana Masslar@dai.aa.gay	
8	E-mail: Julianne.Mossler@doj.ca.gov  Attorneys for Complainant	
9	PEROP	
10	BEFOR BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENG	
11	GEOLO DEPARTMENT OF CO	
12	STATE OF CA	ALIFORNIA
13		
14	In the Matter of the Accusation Against:	Case No. 1265-A
15	RODRIGO SANTOS 118 Chattanooga Street	
16	San Francisco, California 94114	ACCUSATION
17	Civil Engineer License No. C 37153 Structural Engineer License No. S 2984	
18	Respondent.	
19		
20	PART	TIES
21	1. Richard B. Moore, PLS (Complainant	) brings this Accusation solely in his official
22	capacity as the Executive Officer of the Board for	Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and
23	Geologists (Board), Department of Consumer Aff	airs.
24	2. On or about July 22, 1983, the Board	issued Civil Engineer License Number C 37153
25	to Rodrigo Santos (Respondent). The Civil Engin	eer License was in full force and effect at all
26	times relevant to the charges brought in this Accu	sation and will expire on June 30, 2024, unless
27	renewed.	
28	3. On or about February 27, 1987, the B	oard issued Structural Engineer License Number
		1

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1	(c) As used in this section, "license" includes "certificate," "permit," "authority," and "registration."
2	
3	8. Section 6775 of the Code states in relevant part:
4	[T]he board may publicly reprove, suspend for a period not to exceed two
5	years, or revoke the certificate of any professional engineer licensed under this chapter on any of the following grounds:
6 7	(a) Any conviction of a crime substantially related to the qualifications, functions, and duties of a licensed professional engineer, in which case the certified record of conviction shall be conclusive evidence thereof.
8	(b) Any deceit, misrepresentation, or fraud in his or her practice.
9	
10	(g) A violation in the course of the practice of professional engineering of a rule or regulation of unprofessional conduct adopted by the board.
11	(h) A violation of any provision of this chapter or any other law relating to or
12	involving the practice of professional engineering.
13	REGULATORY PROVISIONS
14	9. Section 404 of the Title 16, California Code of Regulations states:
15 16	For the purpose of the rules and regulations contained in this chapter, the following terms are defined. No definition contained herein authorizes the practice of engineering as defined in the Professional Engineers Act.
17	
18	(k) "Civil engineer" refers to a person who holds a valid license in the branch of civil engineering, as defined in Section 6702 of the Code.
19 20	(l) "Civil engineering" is that branch of professional engineering as defined in
	Section 6731 of the Code.
21	
<ul><li>22</li><li>23</li></ul>	(ii) "Professional engineer" refers to a person engaged in the practice of professional engineering as defined in Section 6701 of the Code.
24	(jj) "Professional engineering" within the meaning of this chapter comprises the
25	following branches: agricultural engineering, chemical engineering, civil engineering, control system engineering, corrosion engineering, electrical engineering, fire protection engineering, industrial engineering, manufacturing
26	engineering, mechanical engineering, metallurgical engineering, nuclear engineering, petroleum engineering, quality engineering, safety engineering, and traffic
27	engineering.
28	

(oo) "structural engineer" refers to a civil engineer who holds a valid authorization to use the title 'structural engineer," as provided in Section 6736 of the Code.

(pp) "structural engineering" for the purposes of structural authority is the application of specialized civil engineering knowledge and experience to the design and analysis of buildings (or other structures) which are constructed or rehabilitated to resist forces induced by vertical and horizontal loads of a static and dynamic nature. This specialized knowledge includes familiarity with scientific and mathematical principles, experimental research data and practical construction methods and processes. The design and analysis shall include consideration of stability, deflection, stiffness and other structural phenomena that affect the behavior of the building (or other structure).

. . .

## 10. Section 416 of the Title 16, California Code of Regulations states in relevant part:

- (a) For the purpose of denial, suspension, or revocation of the certification of an engineer-in-training or a land surveyor-in-training or license of a professional engineer or a land surveyor pursuant to Section 141, Division 1.5 (commencing with Section 475), subdivision (a) of Section 6775, subdivision (a) of Section 6775.1, Section 6779, subdivision (e) of Section 8780, subdivision (a) of Section 8780.1, or Section 8783 of the Business and Professions Code, a crime, professional misconduct, or act shall be considered substantially related to the qualifications, functions, and duties of a professional engineer or land surveyor if, to a substantial degree, it evidences present or potential unfitness of a professional engineer or land surveyor to perform the functions authorized by the license in a manner consistent with the public health, safety, or welfare.
- (b) In making the substantial relationship determination required under subdivision (a) for a crime, the Board shall consider all of the following criteria:
  - (1) The nature and gravity of the offense.
  - (2) The number of years elapsed since the date of the offense.
  - (3) The nature and duties of a professional engineer or land surveyor.
- (c) For purposes of subdivision (a), substantially related crimes, professional misconduct, or acts shall include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (1) For engineers-in-training and professional engineers, any violations of the provisions of the Professional Engineers Act or other state or federal laws governing the practice of professional engineering or aiding and abetting any person in such a violation;

. . .

- (3) A conviction of a crime arising from or in connection with the practice of professional engineering or land surveying.
- 11. Section 475 of the Title 16, California Code of Regulations, states in relevant part:

To protect and safeguard the health, safety, welfare, and property of the public, every

person who is licensed by the Board as a professional engineer, including licensees employed in any manner by a governmental entity or in private practice, shall comply with this Code of Professional Conduct. A violation of this Code of Professional Conduct in the practice of professional engineering constitutes unprofessional conduct and is grounds for disciplinary action pursuant to Section 6775 of the Code. This Code of Professional Conduct shall be used for the sole purpose of investigating complaints and making findings

(a) Compliance with Laws Applicable to a Project:

A licensee shall provide professional services for a project in a manner that is consistent with the laws, codes, ordinances, rules, and regulations applicable to that project. A licensee may obtain and rely upon the advice of other professionals (e.g., architects, attorneys, professional engineers, professional land surveyors, and other qualified persons) as to the intent and meaning of such laws, codes, and regulations.

#### COST RECOVERY

Section 125.3 of the Code provides, in pertinent part, that the Board may request the administrative law judge to direct a licensee found to have committed a violation or violations of the licensing act to pay a sum not to exceed the reasonable costs of the investigation and enforcement of the case, with failure of the licensee to comply subjecting the license to not being renewed or reinstated. If a case settles, recovery of investigation and enforcement costs may be

#### FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- On January 13, 2023, in *United States of America v. Rodrigo Santos*, United States District Court, Northern District of California Indictment numbers CR 21-268-SI, CR 21-453-SI and CR 22-345-SI, Respondent entered pleas of guilty to:
  - Counts 1 through 10 of Indictment CR 21-268-SI charging Bank Fraud in violation of
  - Count 11 of Indictment CR 21-268-SI charging Falsification of Records in a Federal Investigation in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1519;
  - Counts 1 through 5 of Information CR 345-SI charging Tax Evasion in violation of
  - Count 2 of Indictment CR 21-453-SI charging Honest Services Wire Fraud in
- As part of his plea agreement in connection with the charge of Bank Fraud (Counts 1 through 10 of Indictment CR 21-268-SI), Respondent admitted that:

- Starting no later than November 2012 and continuing through March 2019, Respondent devised a scheme to fraudulently obtain money from clients. As part of the scheme, Respondent requested, or caused an employee of his firm to request, numerous checks from clients made payable to the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection (DBI), the Department of Public Works (DPW), other municipal agencies, private companies, or individuals. Respondent led his clients to believe that the checks they wrote would be used to pay fees or other costs associated with their building and construction projects, but in truth, Respondent intended to deposit the checks into his personal bank account.
- In many instances, once Respondent obtained the checks from his clients, he fraudulently altered the checks by editing the "pay to the order of" field to make the checks appear as if they were written to him personally. In other instances, Respondent fraudulently endorsed checks to himself by signing the back of the check on behalf of the payee without authorization from the payee or from the client who wrote the check.
- Respondent deposited the altered and fraudulently endorsed client checks into his personal account, causing funds from clients' banks to be transferred into his account.
- Between approximately November 2012 and March 2019, Respondent deposited approximately 445 fraudulently obtained checks amounting to approximately \$775,412.90 into his personal account.
- Respondent also admitted devising and executing a related scheme starting no later than November 2012 and continuing through October 2018 where he requested, or caused an employee of his firm to request, checks from clients payable to his firm in connection with work he completed for those clients on behalf of the firm.
- After receiving checks payable to firm, Respondent deposited those checks into his personal bank account without informing the firm or his business partner, and without permission from the firm, his business partner, or the clients. Checks payable to the firm should have been deposited into the firm's business bank account, but instead, Respondent fraudulently endorsed each check by signing his name on the back for deposit into his personal account. Respondent agreed that his fraudulent endorsement on the back of each check amounted to a misrepresentation that he had the authority to deposit checks payable to the firm into his personal bank account. In fact, Respondent did not have authority to do so, and agreed that his fraudulent misrepresentations caused funds from clients' banks to be transferred into his personal account.
- Between approximately November of 2012 and November 2018, Respondent admitted diverting approximately 378 checks into his personal account, causing a loss to his firm of \$719,883.34.
- Respondent admitted that the total fraud loss amount is \$1,495,296.24.
- 15. As part of his plea agreement in connection with the charge of Falsification of Records in a Federal Investigation (Count 11 of Indictment CR 21-268-SI), Respondent admitted that:
  - On March 2, 2020, Respondent received a grand jury subpoena requesting documents related to six specific client checks connected to the fraud scheme. In response to the subpoena, Respondent prepared falsified invoices to make it appear that clients received credit for checks that Respondent deposited into his personal bank account

(RODRIGO SANTOS) ACCUSATION

1	• Respondent admitted that neither he nor the inspector ever disclosed the donations to DBI management, and that their concealment of the scheme allowed it to continue because, if DBI had known about the SFGGR donations from Respondent's clients,
2	the inspector would not have been permitted to inspect properties associated with Respondent or his firm.
3	ENDOM CANGE FOR DISCORDING
5	FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE (Conviction of Substantially Related Crime)
6	18. Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under Code sections 490, 493, and 6775,
7	subdivision (a), in conjunction with California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 416, in that
8	he was convicted of a crime substantially related to the qualifications, functions, and duties of a
9	licensed professional engineer as more fully set forth in paragraphs 13 through 17, above.
10	SECOND CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE (Migroprosoptation Franch on Descrit in Proceeding)
11	(Misrepresentation, Fraud, or Deceit in Practice)
12	19. Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under Code sections 6775, subdivision
13	(b) in that Respondent engaged in deceit, misrepresentation, or fraud as more fully set forth in
14	paragraphs 13 through 17, above.
15 16	THIRD CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE  (Unprofessional Conduct – Violation of Board Statutes, Regulations, and/or Professional Standards)
17	20. Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under Code section 6775, subdivisions
18	(g) and (h), in conjunction with California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 475, subdivision
19	(a), in that he engaged in unprofessional conduct as more fully set for the in paragraphs 13
20	through 17, above.
21	<u>PRAYER</u>
22	WHEREFORE, Complainant requests that a hearing be held on the matters alleged in this
23	Accusation, and that following the hearing, the Board for Professional Engineers, Land
24	Surveyors, and Geologists issue a decision:
25	1. Revoking or suspending Civil Engineer License Number C 37153, issued to Rodrigo
26	Santos;
27	2. Revoking or suspending Structural Engineer License Number S 2984, issued to
28	Rodrigo Santos;

1	3. Ordering Rodrigo Santos to pay the Board for Professional Engineers, Land
2	Surveyors, and Geologists the reasonable costs of the investigation and enforcement of this case,
3	pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 125.3; and,
4	4. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.
5	
6	DATED: 1/30/2023 Original Signed
7	RICHARD B. MOORE, PLS Executive Officer
8	Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists
9	Department of Consumer Affairs State of California
10	Complainant
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