

MINUTES OF THE BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS, AND GEOLOGISTS

Department of Consumer Affairs
1625 North Market Boulevard, Hearing Room, #102
Sacramento, CA 95834

Thursday, July 24, 2025

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|-------------------------------|--|
| Board Members Present: | President Guillermo Martinez; Vice-President Frank Ruffino; Fel Amistad; Alireza Asgari; Rossana D'Antonio; Desirea Haggard; Tom Hallinan; Michael Hartley; Betsy Mathieson; Fermin Villegas; and Christina Wong |
| Board Members Absent: | Wilfredo Sanchez and Cliff Waldeck |

I. Roll Call to Establish a Quorum

President Martinez called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and a quorum was established.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-President Ruffino led everyone in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

During Public Comment, Rob McMillan, representing CLSA, thanked the Board for allowing the public to attend remotely.

William Estepa, representing ACEC, introduced himself and announced that he is replacing Bob DeWitt, who has retired, as the organization's representative.

IV. Administration

A. Fiscal Year 2024/25 Budget Report

Dawn Hall, Administrative Services Manager, presented the financial report for Fiscal Year 2024/25. She reported that revenue was over \$10.9m. Revenues through Fiscal Month 11 are at \$11.6m and have exceeded our full year projection. Increases over projections are mostly in initial application and examination fees. She anticipates meeting our full year renewal revenue projections. The fund condition statement was not updated to reflect the actual revenue. Increases in the revenue over projections will have a positive impact on the fund balance and months in reserve.

Expenses have been updated to reflect increases in Attorney General and Office of Administrative Hearing costs. Increases in expenses were reflected on the fund condition statement and had a small impact on the months in reserve calculation.

As for the fund condition, the total expenditure projection to year end is \$12,311,510. The months in reserve decreased from 1.7 (last board meeting) to 1.6 in Fiscal Month 11. The fund condition has also been updated to reflect the Fiscal Year 2025/26 expense projection downward according to the budget that was signed June 27, 2025. Staff is currently working on updating the full year revenue and expenses for Fiscal Year 2025/26 and expects to report the full year actual results for prior year Fiscal Year 2024/25 in September or November.

Board member Asgari asked how many people pay their fees with credit cards. Ms. Hall explained that all Connect transactions are via credit card, and debit cards are not accepted. The Board does not pass on credit card fees to users.

V. Enforcement

A. Enforcement Statistical Reports

1. Fiscal Year 2024/25 Update

Brook Grabowski, Enforcement Program Manager, presented the latest Enforcement statistics and reviewed the accompanying graphs for the new Board members.

VI. Exams/Licensing

A. Examination/Licensing Updates

Mr. Moore provided data from the first three computer-based administrations of the new NCEES PE-Structural exam which has had some controversy due to the change in format. Pass rates for candidates who choose the California Board tend to exceed the national average through these three administrations, as expected. Some of the areas that are a little bit more problematic in terms of the issues with computer-based testing (CBT) is the depth portion. Candidates used to be able to bring reference books when the exams were administered in paper and pencil format, but that practice has been discontinued with the move to CBT. This change added complexity for both NCEES and candidates. The provided reference materials did not align with candidate expectations. This represents an initial setback; while the impact was on a relatively small scale, a single percentage point in decline can be impactful. Any administration that results in a passing rate under 20% over multiple exam administrations tends to signify a considerable issue, regardless of population volume, and consequently generated concerns.

During public comment, Carl Josephson, representing SEAOC, noted that despite whether candidates perform well on the exam, they still were requiring more time. The breadth sections of the exam are offered much more frequently and can be taken at any time, while the depth sections of the exam are only offered in April and October due to lower populations and the need for NCEES to build a sufficient item bank. NCEES staff has met with Pearson Vue, and its psychometricians determined that the original exam time was not sufficient,

even for high-performing candidates. As a result, they have extended the exam by an additional hour.

Michael Parolini, representing SEAOC, indicated there are approximately 7,300 structural licenses in California. Licensees with numbers in the 3000s are either retired or no longer with us. 70 licenses issued per year is low. The concern is not just the number of Structural engineers that come in but the number of students choosing STEM in education is dropping. He expressed the importance for young people to get into STEM.

Mr. Moore provided an update on the Connect application review backlog process for civil engineer applications. Licensing staff and Senior Registrars teamed up to tackle the backlog. Since October 2024, more applications are being approved in technical review than are being received on a monthly basis. He commends their progress, noting a significant improvement in turnaround times after previous struggles.

Mr. Moore shared licensing statistics, highlighting a significant increase in Practice Act licenses issued this past Fiscal Year, a trend he is very pleased to see. He also reviewed current licensing trends, noting that some individuals maintain active licenses despite being retired from their occupation while others will let them lapse until they become cancelled. The most substantial growth in active Practice Act licenses has been among electrical engineers. Regarding the overall volume of licenses issued annually, civil engineers consistently represent the largest population, while geophysicists remain the smallest group.

As for the Title Act licenses, there is a similar trend. They are climbing and the numbers of licenses issued are very high in comparison to where they once were with substantial growth in fire protection, and control systems, with a slight increase for chemical engineering.

Board member Wong suggested using these data in the strategic planning process.

William Estepa, representing ACEC, inquired at what point will the Board consider the increasing negative numbers of Professional Land Surveyor licensees a concern? Mr. Moore clarified that any decrease in numbers is a concern for the Board, though the level of concern varies. He explained that while licensing numbers are lower than the previous decade, they are still positive. He also noted that the Board's licensing volume directly reflects the number of applications submitted, therefore, drops in licenses issued generally indicate fewer applications received by the Board.

VII. Legislation

A. 2025 Legislative Calendar

Mr. Moore reviewed the legislative calendar and noted that they are currently on summer recess and will return August 18, 2025.

B. Discussion of Legislation for 2025 (Possible Action)

1. Assembly Bill (AB) 667 – Professions and vocations: license examinations; interpreters

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| MOTION: | Vice-President Ruffino and Ms. Mathieson moved to take a Watch position on AB 667 as amended July 8, 2025. |
| VOTE: | 11-0, Motion Carried |

| Member Name | Yes | No | Abstain | Absent | Recusal |
|------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|---------|
| President Martinez | X | | | | |
| Vice-President Ruffino | X | | | | |
| Fel Amistad | X | | | | |
| Alireza Asgari | X | | | | |
| Rossana D'Antonio | X | | | | |
| Desirea Haggard | X | | | | |
| Tom Hallinan | X | | | | |
| Michael Hartley | X | | | | |
| Betsy Mathieson | X | | | | |
| Wilfredo Sanchez | | | | X | |
| Fermin Villegas | X | | | | |
| Cliff Waldeck | | | | X | |
| Christina Wong | X | | | | |

2. AB 671 – Accelerated restaurant building plan approval

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| MOTION: | Vice-President Ruffino and Ms. Wong moved to take a Watch position on AB 671 as amended July 9, 2025. |
| VOTE: | 11-0, Motion Carried |

| Member Name | Yes | No | Abstain | Absent | Recusal |
|------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|---------|
| President Martinez | X | | | | |
| Vice-President Ruffino | X | | | | |
| Fel Amistad | X | | | | |
| Alireza Asgari | X | | | | |
| Rossana D'Antonio | X | | | | |
| Desirea Haggard | X | | | | |
| Tom Hallinan | X | | | | |
| Michael Hartley | X | | | | |
| Betsy Mathieson | X | | | | |
| Wilfredo Sanchez | | | | X | |
| Fermin Villegas | X | | | | |
| Cliff Waldeck | | | | X | |

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| Christina Wong | X | | | | |
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3. **AB 742** – Department of Consumer Affairs: licensing: applicants who are descendants of slaves

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| MOTION: | Ms. Wong and Dr. Amistad moved to take a Watch position on AB 742 as amended July 2, 2025. |
| VOTE: | 11-0, Motion Carried |

| Member Name | Yes | No | Abstain | Absent | Recusal |
|------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|---------|
| President Martinez | X | | | | |
| Vice-President Ruffino | X | | | | |
| Fel Amistad | X | | | | |
| Alireza Asgari | X | | | | |
| Rossana D'Antonio | X | | | | |
| Desirea Haggard | X | | | | |
| Tom Hallinan | X | | | | |
| Michael Hartley | X | | | | |
| Betsy Mathieson | X | | | | |
| Wilfredo Sanchez | | | | X | |
| Fermin Villegas | X | | | | |
| Cliff Waldeck | | | | X | |
| Christina Wong | X | | | | |

4. **AB 1341** – California Public Records Act: record withholding
During public comment, Rob McMillan thanked the Board for their support on this Bill.

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| MOTION: | Dr. Amistad and Ms. D'Antonio moved to take a Support position on AB 1341 as amended July 2, 2025 |
| VOTE: | 11-0, Motion Carried |

| Member Name | Yes | No | Abstain | Absent | Recusal |
|------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|---------|
| President Martinez | X | | | | |
| Vice-President Ruffino | X | | | | |
| Fel Amistad | X | | | | |
| Alireza Asgari | X | | | | |
| Rossana D'Antonio | X | | | | |
| Desirea Haggard | X | | | | |
| Tom Hallinan | X | | | | |
| Michael Hartley | X | | | | |
| Betsy Mathieson | X | | | | |
| Wilfredo Sanchez | | | | X | |
| Fermin Villegas | X | | | | |
| Cliff Waldeck | | | | X | |

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| Christina Wong | X | | | | |
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5. **Senate Bill (SB) 470** – Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act: teleconferencing
No further action is required by the Board at this time.

6. **SB 518** – Descendants of enslaved persons; reparations

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| MOTION: | Dr. Amistad and Ms. Wong moved to take a Watch position on SB 518 as amended July 3, 2025. |
| VOTE: | 11-0, Motion Carried |

| Member Name | Yes | No | Abstain | Absent | Recusal |
|------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|---------|
| President Martinez | X | | | | |
| Vice-President Ruffino | X | | | | |
| Fel Amistad | X | | | | |
| Alireza Asgari | X | | | | |
| Rossana D'Antonio | X | | | | |
| Desirea Haggard | X | | | | |
| Tom Hallinan | X | | | | |
| Michael Hartley | X | | | | |
| Betsy Mathieson | X | | | | |
| Wilfredo Sanchez | | | | X | |
| Fermin Villegas | X | | | | |
| Cliff Waldeck | | | | X | |
| Christina Wong | X | | | | |

7. **SB 641** – Department of Consumer Affairs and Department of Real Estate: states of emergency: waivers and exemptions
No further action is required by the Board at this time.

8. **SB 861** – Consumer affairs

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| MOTION: | Vice-President Ruffino and Mr. Hartley moved to take a Support position on SB 861 as amended June 30, 2025 |
| VOTE: | 11-0, Motion Carried |

| Member Name | Yes | No | Abstain | Absent | Recusal |
|------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|---------|
| President Martinez | X | | | | |
| Vice-President Ruffino | X | | | | |
| Fel Amistad | X | | | | |
| Alireza Asgari | X | | | | |
| Rossana D'Antonio | X | | | | |
| Desirea Haggard | X | | | | |
| Tom Hallinan | X | | | | |
| Michael Hartley | X | | | | |
| Betsy Mathieson | X | | | | |

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|------------------|---|--|--|---|--|
| Wilfredo Sanchez | | | | X | |
| Fermin Villegas | X | | | | |
| Cliff Waldeck | | | | X | |
| Christina Wong | X | | | | |

VIII. Executive Officer's Report

A. Rulemaking Status Report

Mr. Moore reported that the Budget office approved the Board's fee regulatory package on July 14, 2025 which will now proceed to DCA Executive leadership before going to Agency review.

B. Personnel

Mr. Moore announced that the Senior Registrar Engineer position remains vacant. Applications are currently being accepted, and staff are looking forward to reviewing qualified candidates.

C. Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG)

The out of state travel request has been submitted to attend the ASBOG Annual Meeting and Council of Examiners (COE) meeting in Salt Lake City, UT in October 2025.

D. National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES)

1. Annual Meeting, August 19-22, 2025 (**Possible Action**)

Mr. Moore presented the action items and conference reports for the August 19-22, 2025, NCEES Annual Meeting. He introduced Aaron Blaisdell, Western Zone Vice-President, who is also a Board member with the Washington state board. He reviewed NCEES's governing body, the vision and mission, and the organizational structure of NCEES.

Mr. Moore asked Board members and staff if any received an invite from NCEES to participate on various NCEES committees. Rossana D'Antonio, Bylaws Committee; Christina Wong, Finance Committee; Frank Ruffino, Leadership Development Committee; Emeritus Member Carl Josephson, Structural Task Force; Ric Moore, UPLG Committee; Emeritus Member Dr. Qureshi, MBA Committee; and Tiffany Criswell, Chair of the Enforcement Committee.

During public comment, Carl Josephson announced that he will be attending the NCEES Annual Meeting as he will be the recipient of the President's award. He was on the structural work group, and they assembled a comprehensive report which included, whether the definition of significant structures be included in model rules and model law, and secondly is whether conditioning and inspections should be included in the definition of engineering. After quite a bit of work, they presented a memo to the Board, and they decided to add significant structures in model rules. It will be presented to a task force where they will make a formal decision and formally

present the recommendation. The second was the definition of engineering, much of it did not need to be included in the definition but the assessment of structures should. He appreciates his emeritus membership as it allows him to participate at the national level.

Mr. McMillan expressed his appreciation for NCEES and congratulated Mr. Josephson on his upcoming award.

Mr. Moore asked if there is anything the Board wished to discuss from the packet of motions in the NCEES Action Items document. There were none.

The case for adding an MBA to the NCEES board of directors

Mr. Moore reported that this topic has come up in discussion with NCEES. Many professional organizations, similar to NCEES or other professions, include a representative of the member board executives or administrators on their board of directors. The topic of adding a Member Board Administrator (MBA) to the NCEES Board of Directors surfaced during discussions at the Central/Western Zone joint interim meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. During the last Western Zone breakout session, a motion was made and failed due to it being a split vote. Mr. Moore decided to write an article for the Licensure Exchange, an NCEES publication. He consulted with other boards because the other board administrators have expressed their positions on this topic. He consulted with the MBA committee chair about submitting an article, which they had been actively seeking. He submitted the article to NCEES, where it underwent minor revisions. The article will not be released until just before the Annual Meeting. He learned from several other board administrators that at least one board is prepared to formally introduce this article on the floor, with others ready to second the motion. He is not advocating for California to be the one to make the motion, as sometimes California's motions are dismissed. He simply wanted to brief the Board on this development from the zone meeting, as he anticipates another board might initiate action, though he is unsure of the specific motion. President Martinez expressed his support and feels that someone in the MBA role should be at the board level with NCEES.

During Public comment, Mr. McMillan said he supports the board's efforts on this motion.

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| MOTION: | Ms. Mathieson and Ms. Haggard moved to provide guidance to our two representatives to advocate and encourage any other state that wants to make the motion to do so. Should no other state initiate the vote, our representatives should do so. |
| VOTE: | 11-0, Motion Carried |

| Member Name | Yes | No | Abstain | Absent | Recusal |
|--------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|---------|
| President Martinez | X | | | | |

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|------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|
| Vice-President Ruffino | X | | | | |
| Fel Amistad | X | | | | |
| Alireza Asgari | X | | | | |
| Rossana D'Antonio | X | | | | |
| Desirea Haggard | X | | | | |
| Tom Hallinan | X | | | | |
| Michael Hartley | X | | | | |
| Betsy Mathieson | X | | | | |
| Wilfredo Sanchez | | | | X | |
| Fermin Villegas | X | | | | |
| Cliff Waldeck | | | | X | |
| Christina Wong | X | | | | |

E. Update on Outreach Efforts

Mr. Moore reviewed the outreach efforts. Ms. Mathieson pointed out that some of the existing outreach efforts are to encourage more people to go into professions that the Board regulates and give students guidance for courses they should be taking to better prepare for them to apply for licensure.

Mr. McMillan thanked Board staff for their involvement in all professional associations.

IX. President's Report/Board Member Activities

President Martinez attended the NCEES State of the Council Meeting and the quarterly DCA Leadership Meeting; Ms. Wong also attended the DCA Leadership Meeting; Vice-President Ruffino welcomed Desirea Haggard and Tom Hallinan to the Board and congratulated Christina Wong on her reappointment to the Board. He added that he serves on the NCEES Leadership Development Committee and provided a brief overview of this committee.

Desirea Haggard introduced herself. She is the Vice-President of Sustainability and Environmental at UNACEM, a construction materials company focusing on cement, concrete, and mining aggregate. She has 20 years of experience in cement with a focus on environmental, permitting and compliance. She is excited to be on the Board and hopes to have an opportunity to be involved with NCEES and the various committees and expressed her willingness to help where needed.

Tom Hallinan introduced himself and for the last 30 years has been a local government city and special district attorney. Over the last year he transitioned and works part time as a city attorney and a prosecutor in Stanislaus County. He also mentioned that he has a background in legislation.

X. Approval of Meeting Minutes (Possible Action)

A. Approval of May 29, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes

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| MOTION: | Ms. Wong and Dr. Amistad moved to approve the minutes as amended. |
| VOTE: | 9-2, Motion Carried |

| Member Name | Yes | No | Abstain | Absent | Recusal |
|------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|---------|
| President Martinez | X | | | | |
| Vice-President Ruffino | X | | | | |
| Fel Amistad | X | | | | |
| Alireza Asgari | X | | | | |
| Rossana D'Antonio | X | | | | |
| Desirea Haggard | X | | | | |
| Tom Hallinan | | | X | | |
| Michael Hartley | | | X | | |
| Betsy Mathieson | X | | | | |
| Wilfredo Sanchez | | | | X | |
| Fermin Villegas | X | | | | |
| Cliff Waldeck | | | | X | |
| Christina Wong | X | | | | |

XI. Closed Session – The Board met in Closed Session to discuss, as needed:

- A. Deliberate on a Decision(s) to be Reached in a Proceeding(s) Required to be Conducted Pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500), as Authorized by Government Code Section 11126(c)(3).
- B. Confer with, or Receive Advice from, Its Legal Counsel Regarding Pending Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 11126(e)(1) and (2)(A), on the following matters:
 1. Crownholm et al. v. Moore, et al. No. 24-276, cert. pending (filed Sep. 9, 2024), Supreme Court of the United States, Crownholm, et al. v. Moore, et al. (No. 23-15138) (9th Cir. April 16, 2024)
 2. Shahrokh Esmaily-Radvar vs. Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 25STCP02175
 3. James MacGregor Renfrew, Jr. vs. Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 25STCP02233

XII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

PUBLIC PRESENT

Aaron Blaisdell, NCEES
William Estepa, ACEC
Carl Josephson, SEAOC
Rob McMillan, CLSA
Hyock Lee