

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

Department of Consumer Affairs
1747 North Market Blvd., Hearing Room #186
Sacramento, CA 95834

Thursday, January 15, 2026

Board Members Present:	President Guillermo Martinez; Vice-President Frank Ruffino; Fel Amistad; Alireza Asgari; Rossana D’Antonio; Desirea Haggard; Tom Hallinan; Michael Hartley; Wilfredo Sanchez; Fermin Villegas; Cliff Waldeck; and Christina Wong
Board Members Absent:	Betsy Mathieson
Board Staff Present:	Ric Moore (Executive Officer); Tiffany Criswell (Assistant Executive Officer); Dawn Hall (Administrative Manager); Larry Kereszt (Examination Manager); Brook Grabowski (Enforcement Manager); Celina Calderone (Board Liaison); Natalie King (Senior Registrar Civil Engineer); Dallas Sweeney (Senior Registrar Land Surveyor); Cheryl Guidi (Exam Analyst); Bruce Locken (Senior Registrar Mechanical Engineer); and Christopher Pirrone (Legal Counsel)

I. Roll Call to Establish a Quorum

President Martinez called the meeting to order at 9:01 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, an individual by the name of David Schwegel representing Vang Inc. Consulting Engineers praised his CEO Ken Vang, project manager on the Merced-Sacramento section of the high-speed rail project. Mr. Schwegel used this success to call for a shift in engineering culture, suggesting that all California professional engineers complete the Dale Carnegie training course to improve human relation skills. Mr. Schwegel noted that he has been working diligently since 2005 to make a traffic engineering license mean something in California. He conducted a side-by-side comparison with engineers and lawyers. Lawyers are much more actively engaged in professional associations than their engineering counterparts and lawyers consistently deal better with people and are more flexible under changing situations. Mr. Schwegel is pushing for a national traffic engineering license. He is continuing to work with NCEES to be able to license traffic engineers for all 50 states. He respects the Board not wanting to be

involved however he advised the Board that if this goes through, California is going to be at a disadvantage as the remaining 49 states in the nation will have traffic engineers as a regular practice and California will see traffic engineers leave the state in droves. The last he checked, two of the five most congested regions in North America are here in California demanding the drive for traffic engineering services. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) supports elevating traffic from title to practice by 2 to 1. He will continue to work with them to achieve this goal.

An individual by the name of Dylan Holmes thanked the Board for continuing a virtual option. Through his research and working with NCEES, he discovered that the exam that is created by NCEES is a result of soliciting information from licensed civil engineers across the nation asking them what is relevant to the practice resulting in an exam which is administered nationwide. However, upon submittal of your experience to the state of California, it does not consider that to be relevant experience resulting in a confusing process that feeds into the six-month backlog that has been in place since he started the process of trying to get licensed 3 1/2 years ago. There remains a fundamental disconnect between the statute and the Board's current evaluation criteria. Specifically, subsections (d) and (e) of the PE Act, (d) Appraisals or valuations. (e) The preparation or submission of designs, plans and specifications and engineering reports; and the last subsection (f) Coordination of the work of professional, technical, or special consultants are all items that do not qualify in the state of California. To remedy the ambiguity, he is requesting that the Board publish a comprehensive scope of practice guide with examples of qualifying versus non-qualifying work and to address the six-month backlog as he believes it has been long enough.

Scott Jercich, a retired licensed professional engineer and one of the organizers of a volunteer program called operation Math Lift, expressed his concern with math preparedness in California. He believes engineers are uniquely positioned to help address it. In the Folsom-Cordova Unified School District, where the program operates, more than half of the 21,000 students do not meet math standards and are having difficulty with math resulting in thousands of students entering middle and high school already behind in the subject. The Dean of math, science, and engineering at Folsom Lake College has told him directly that students pursuing STEM pathways are increasingly under prepared for college level math. The problem does not start in college. It starts in elementary school where foundational skills are either built or lost. Operation Math Lift addresses this gap directly. They place retired and practicing engineers into the classrooms to work one-on-one with small groups of students who are struggling with math and the program is working. It is widely supported by teachers, principals, district administrators, and most importantly students respond to it. He is asking the board to consider a simple question, is it in the public interest and consistent with the board's mission to inform licensed engineers with an opportunity to strengthen math education and protect the future of the profession. Simply informing engineers, many retired and eager to serve that their skills are urgently needed in public schools. Perhaps a board e-

mail notice to licensees about volunteer opportunities with operation Math Lift would support public education, strengthen the engineering pipeline, and align directly with the board's public protection mission. He thanked the Board for their time and service and for considering how the profession can help lift the next generation one student at a time.

IV. Hearing on the Petition for Reinstatement of Revoked License of Claude Keissieh

This hearing was held on Thursday, January 15, 2026.

9:14 a.m. Wilfredo Sanchez arrived.

The Board met in Closed Session immediately following the Hearing on the Petition for Reinstatement of Revoked License to decide that matter, pursuant to Government Code Section 11126(c)(3).

V. 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

1:30 p.m. Tom Hallinan left.

III. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda (Cont.)

William Estepa, representing ACEC California, noted his attendance and expressed his appreciation to the Board for the opportunity to participate.

Lucy Saldivar introduced herself as the new DCA Deputy Director for Board and Bureau Relations. She was appointed by Governor Newsom in October of 2025 and prior to assuming this role she worked in the state legislature, previously serving as Chief of Staff for a legislator. She expressed her enthusiasm for working with the Board and extended an open invitation to the members to reach out whenever her team can be of assistance.

VI. Consideration of Rulemaking Proposals

A. Adoption of Rulemaking Proposal to Amend Title 16, California Code of Regulations sections 407 and 3005 (Fees)

Administrative Manager Dawn Hall reported that following a 2024 fee study, the Board requested to approve a regulatory package for a fee increase. This represents the final action required for approval. During the public notice phase, one comment was received outside the comment period. However, it has been included in the package for the Board’s consideration.

MOTION:	Ms. Wong and Ms. D’Antonio moved to direct staff to take all steps necessary to complete the rulemaking process, including adopting the response to the single, untimely comment received, and the filing of the final rulemaking package with the Office of Administrative Law, authorizing the Executive Officer to make any non-substantive changes to the proposed regulations before completing the rulemaking process, and adopting the proposed regulations at Sections 407 and 3005 as noticed.
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				

VII. Administration

A. Fiscal Year 2025/26 Budget Report

Ms. Hall reviewed the Budget Report and noted there has been no change in the full year projections for revenues and the current year has been updated through Fiscal Month 4.

She went on to report that expenses increased slightly over the last presentation and indicated that a budget year and budget year plus one revenue projections were revised to reflect the pending fee increase. We

expect to show a significant positive effect on the fund condition in months in reserve resulting in an upward trend.

VIII. Enforcement

A. Enforcement Statistical Reports

1. Fiscal Year 2025/26 Update

Enforcement Manager Ms. Grabowski presented the Enforcement Statistics, noting that staff has made significant progress in case management. Processing timeframes are decreasing across all categories. President Martinez commended the Enforcement staff on its performance during the first half of the fiscal year.

IX. Exams/Licensing

A. Examination/Licensing Updates

No report given.

B. Adoption of Test Plan Specifications

1. Professional Geophysicist (PGp) Examination

Larry Kereszt, Examination Manager, and Cheryl Guidi, Staff Examination Analyst responsible for the California Specific Geology examination, presented the Professional Geophysicist (PGp) Examination Test Plan Specifications. Although Ms. Mathieson could not attend, she provided written feedback requesting that “compliance to” be changed to “compliance with” in item II. B.

The second suggestion she offered was for item III. 2. She requested to delete “and engineering” and explained that engineering considerations are important for geophysical projects that provide data for planning, design, construction, and repair of fixed works, but this refers to principles of analysis, and geophysicists do not use engineering principles for their analyses.

Ms. Guidi shared a written comment from Staff Registrar Geologist Josh Goodwin to Ms. Mathieson’s request for item III. 2. He stated, “When someone is analyzing geophysical data, it is important for them to understand both geologic and engineering considerations. For example: if the proposed project is a high-rise building, the PGp would choose a geophysical technique capable of evaluating subsurface materials at depth depending on the geological material involved. Thus, incorporating geologic and engineering considerations into the geophysical model is of great importance”.

MOTION:	Ms. D’Antonio and Mr. Hartley moved to adopt the test plan specifications with the amendment to change “compliance to” to “compliance with” for item II.B.
VOTE:	12-0, 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				

X. Legislation

A. 2026 Legislative Calendar

Mr. Moore reviewed the Legislative Calendar. This is the second year of a two-year legislative cycle. January 16 is the last day for policy committees to consider bills that were introduced last year. January 23 is the last day for any committee to hear and report to the floor bills that were introduced in the last year. January 31 is the last day for each house to pass bills introduced from last year and then February 20 is the last day for bills to be introduced for this year. He will report back at the next board meeting if there are any bills the Board needs to consider.

XI. Executive Officer's Report

A. Rulemaking Status Report

Mr. Moore reported that the fee rulemaking proposal is moving forward with an anticipated effective date of July 1, 2026. Staff is prioritizing items 2, 3, and 4 to shorten the overall regulatory timeline. He expressed his appreciation to the Board for getting the fee package to where it currently stands.

B. Personnel

Mr. Moore introduced Bruce Locken, the newly hired Senior Registrar Professional Engineer who started with the Board Tuesday, January 13. He is a licensed mechanical engineer who graduated from Sacramento State University. Mr. Locken brings a diverse professional background to the Board, with experience spanning the private sector, local county government, and state service.

C. ABET

No report given.

D. Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG)

1. April 9–11, 2026, Council of Examiners Workshop, Branson, MO – Delegate Mr. Moore reported that this event focuses on the national geology exams. Ms. Mathieson is committed to attend as she is the only licensed geologist on the Board. The out-of-state travel request has been initiated, and staff is seeking approval for her to attend.

MOTION:	Vice-President Ruffino and Ms. Wong moved to approve Ms. Mathieson to attend the April 9–11, 2026, Council of Examiners Workshop, Branson, MO.
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				

- E. National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES)
 1. April 30–May 2, 2026, Western Zone Interim Meeting, Bend, OR – Funded Delegates

MOTION:	Mr. Hartley and Ms. Haggard moved to designate Vice-President Ruffino, Ms. Wong, and Ms. Criswell as the three funded delegates. Additionally, the motion named Ms. D'Antonio, Mr. Sweeney, and Ms. King as alternates and directed staff to consult with the budget office regarding funding for these three alternate positions
VOTE:	10-0-1, 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. Update on Western Zone Interim Meeting - Officer Elections

Mr. Moore reported on the upcoming elections for the Western Zone Vice-President and Assistant Vice-President. He noted that to his knowledge, there is currently only one formal nomination for the Vice-President vacancy. Mr. Moore also informed the Board that Scott Sayles, a board member from Arizona, has officially announced his candidacy for the position via an email sent to all active, associate, and emeritus members of NCEES.

Ms. Wong serves on the nominating committee and announced that if there is any interest, the nomination will remain open until February 23, 2026.

XII. President’s Report/Board Member Activities

President Martinez attended the quarterly DCA leadership meeting on December 12, 2025.

On December 12, 2025, Ms. Wong attended the NCEES Committee on Finances meeting.

Mr. Hartley reported that Fresno State Geomatics Department hosts an annual conference every January. He and Dallas Sweeney spoke last year about the path to licensure. They were invited back for the 2026 conference, and they will be speaking about licensure and monument preservation.

Vice-President Ruffino also attended the quarterly DCA leadership meeting and added that the Western Zone will have a virtual meeting on January 21, 2026 at 2 p.m. The guest speaker will be Lehmon Dekle, P.E. Chief Officer of Examinations. Vice-President Ruffino also intends to participate in the scheduled NCEES state of the council meetings.

XIII. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A. Approval of November 13, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION:	Mr. Hartley and Dr. Amistad moved that the minutes of the November 13, 2025, board meeting be approved as amended.
VOTE:	11-0, Motion Carried

Member Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recusal
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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				

XIV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

PUBLIC PRESENT

Claude Keissieh

Abraham Hessabi, PECCG

David Schwegel, Vang Inc. Consulting Engineers

William Estepa, ACEC-CA

Krystinne Mica, SEAOC