

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, March 5, 2026

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

I. Roll Call to Establish a Quorum

President Martinez called the meeting to order at 9:03 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 Scott Jercich, retired licensed professional engineer, presented information regarding Operation Math Lift, a volunteer initiative that places retired and practicing engineers in elementary and middle school classrooms to provide one-on-one foundational math support. He expressed appreciation for Executive Officer Moore's commitment to featuring Operation Math Lift in the Board's newsletter. He explained that the program which pairs engineers with students for foundational math tutoring addresses a critical proficiency gap in California schools. He requested the Board determine if this outreach constitutes official board business and encouraged the Board to support initiatives that leverage engineering expertise to solve statewide educational challenges.

Former Board Members Jim Foley and Patrick Tami commended Board Liaison Celina Calderone for her service, noting this as the final meeting she will facilitate prior to her retirement.

Steve Brown, licensed traffic engineer, noted that the term Traffic Engineer is outdated and suggests a narrow focus on automobiles. Mr. Brown proposed updating the license title to “Transportation Engineer,” asserting that this change more accurately reflects the scope of what engineers practice in California.

IV. Administration

A. Fiscal Year 2025/26 Budget Report

Ms. Dawn Hall, Administrative Manager, reported that projected revenues remain unchanged since the previous Board meeting. Expense projections saw a slight increase driven by a new print contract and higher DCA Pro Rata for Department of Investigation expenses; the overall fund condition remains stable. This did not have an impact on the overall fund condition as the Statewide Pro Rata was adjusted down, and the projected months in reserve have gone up slightly since the January Board Meeting.

Ms. Mathieson requested clarification regarding the increase in printing expenses. Ms. Hall attributed the rise to a transition in vendors after the previous contractor declined to renew. To mitigate these costs, Ms. Hall noted that the Board is moving toward digital notifications for certain renewal notices. She further clarified that the projected expenses reflect the full encumbrance of both current and overlapping contracts, and actual expenditures are expected to be significantly lower.

V. Enforcement

A. Enforcement Statistical Reports

1. Fiscal Year 2025/26 Update

Brook Grabowski, Enforcement Manager, presented the current Enforcement statistics, noting an upward trend in cases within the 1-3 year investigation phase. She emphasized that staff has prioritized these specific cases to streamline the process and reduce overall resolution timelines.

Mr. Moore added that a couple of years ago, a vacant position was lost in the Enforcement unit which resulted in the redistribution of the workload. Ms. Grabowski is working with her staff to optimize workflow and effectively manage the increased caseload.

VI. Exams/Licensing

A. Examination/Licensing Updates

No report given.

B. 2025 Examination Results

Larry Kereszt, Exam Development Manager, presented the examination results for 2025 and a historical view of each of the state exams as well as the national geology exams going back as far as 2018. He presented a comparative analysis of candidate statistics dating back to 2018 to evaluate the pandemic's impact on examinations. He noted that while the data reflects significant shifts over the last several years, 2025 emerged as a particularly strong year for the size of the candidate population, suggesting a good recovery in the applicant population. Of the 9 state specific exams, 6 of them had the highest total number of candidates since 2018, which is very encouraging.

During Public Comment, Carl Josephson representing the Structural Engineer Association of California (SEAOC) suggested including test results for all four of the engineering exam components, breadth and depth, vertical and lateral. There is a lot of discussion at the national level about how the depth exam is doing as the pass rates have been low and (who?) suspects that they are low for California as well. Reporting on the components individually would offer a more accurate reflection of candidate performance. He also noted that candidates will be granted an additional hour for the depth portion of the upcoming structural exam, while maintaining its current 60 questions. Beginning next year, the depth portion will retain the extended time but will reduce the total question count to 48. He advised that these changes may cause pass rates to fluctuate as the new format is implemented.

VII. Legislation

A. 2026 Legislative Calendar

Mr. Moore reviewed the legislative calendar. February 20th was the last day for bills to be introduced. Staff continues to monitor spot bills that did not make the agenda as there is nothing to consider at this time. As bills are being introduced, they are getting scheduled and assigned to committees, but the hearings are just beginning to be scheduled. Spring recess begins March 26th resulting in the first hearings in the initial committees which may take place over the next couple of weeks.

B. Discussion of Legislation for 2026 (**Possible Action**)

1. Assembly Bill (AB) 1693 – Accelerated retailer building plan approval

MOTION:	Mr. Hartley and Ms. Mathieson moved to take a watch position on AB 1693 as introduced on February 3, 2026.
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				
Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson	X				
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				
Christina Wong	X				

2. AB 1775 – Veterans

MOTION:	Vice-President Ruffino and Dr. Amistad moved to take a watch position on AB 1775 as introduced on February 9, 2026.
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				
Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson	X				
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				
Christina Wong	X				

3. AB 1933 – Land surveyors: records of survey

MOTION:	Vice-President Ruffino and Mr. Hartley moved to take a Watch position on AB 1933 as introduced on February 13, 2026, and direct Staff to continue working with the bill's sponsor and author to address the Board's concerns and revise the language as appropriate.
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				
Michael Hartley	X				

Betsy Mathieson	X				
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				
Christina Wong	X				

4. AB 1999 – Land Surveyors: photogrammetry

MOTION:	Ms. Wong and Mr. Hartley moved to take a watch position on AB 1999 as introduced on February 17, 2026
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				
Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson	X				
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				
Christina Wong	X				

5. AB 2287 – Contractors: disciplinary action

During Public Comment, William Estepa representing American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) stated the organization's formal opposition to the bill. Mr. Estepa argued that the proposed carve-out risks undermining the enforcement of existing building laws. He further contended that the legislation blurs the distinction between construction activities and professional engineering and surveying services, potentially increasing liability for firms and compromising established scope of practice protections.

Rob Carrion, representing Operating Engineers Local 3, echoed Mr. Estepa's comment. The language that is being proposed states that the licensee who engages in the use of technologies, tools, and equipment while performing construction work pursuant to this chapter shall not be subject to disciplinary action. It is opening the surveying industry for anyone that has some form of license to perform surveying without being disciplined. He noted that discussions with the bill's proponents confirmed this broad interpretation of the language. Due to these significant risks to

the practice and public protection, the Operating Engineers formally recommended that the Board oppose the bill.

Following further discussion, Mr. Carrion stated that it was his understanding that the bill is currently on hold and will not proceed during this legislative session.

MOTION:	Mr. Hartley and Dr. Amistad moved to oppose unless amended on AB 2287 as introduced on February 19, 2026
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				
Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson	X				
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				
Christina Wong	X				

6. Senate Bill (SB) 1011 – Energy: Utility Infrastructure AI Safety, Oversight, and Workforce Protection Act

MOTION:	Ms. Haggard and Mr. Villegas moved to take a watch position on SB 1011 as introduced on February 10, 2026
VOTE:	11-1, 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				
Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson		X			
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				

Christina Wong	X				
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7. SB 1248 – State agencies: automated decision systems

MOTION:	Mr. Hartley and Ms. Wong moved to take a watch position on SB 1248 as introduced on February 19, 2026
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				
Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson	X				
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				
Christina Wong	X				

VIII. Rulemaking Status Report

A. Pending Rulemaking Efforts – Status Report

Mr. Moore reported that the fees rulemaking package is moving through the process and anticipates final approval by April 1, which would allow the new fee structure to be reflected on the July 1 renewal notices.

Mr. Moore introduced DCA's Rulemaking legal counsel, Deepi Miller.

B. Request for the Board to Revise California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 5, §§ 400-476 and Division 29, §§ 3000-3067 to Use Gender-Neutral Language (**Possible Action**)

Mr. Moore addressed the Board's position on adopting gender-neutral language, confirming that while the Board supports this objective, implementation is affected by significant workload and procedural challenges. The change in language would be subject to justification. He noted that the complexity and scale of the proposed revisions may prevent the use of a Section 100 amendment process. As a result, the Board is evaluating the most efficient path forward.

Mr. Moore presented language that is in an existing section in the Geologist and Geophysicist regulations. This language has been there for many years and suggested that the board could consider utilizing and modifying it to today's standards and add it into the Engineers and Land Surveyors regulations in lieu of making a universal change throughout the entire document. This language

could make all gendered references throughout the document as gender-neutral, achieving compliance without a full-scale rewrite.

Mr. Moore explained that the Board proactively incorporates these changes whenever relevant statutes are opened for legislative review such as changing “registered” to “licensed”. As with any legislative amendment it would require a formal draft process through the Legislative Council, which would result in a comprehensive review of the affected language.

During Public Comment, Krystinne Mica, Executive Director of the Structural Engineers Association of California (SEAOC) addressed the Board and reported that they reviewed the staff report and appreciate the thoughtful analysis and understand the concerns raised by the rulemaking process and trust that if the Board chooses to move forward, staff and regulatory counsel will identify the most appropriate path to achieve this goal. They asked the Board to take the first step and proceed with this effort. SEAOC made this request because the language of the governing regulation signals who belongs in this profession. Gender pronouns are not a neutral choice and potentially exclude engineers and geoscientists who do not use those pronouns at a time when gender non-conforming professionals are facing increasing legal pressure. California’s licensing framework has the opportunity to lead with inclusion. SEAOC is grateful for the Board's consideration and hopeful for their support.

During Public Comment an individual by the name of Gwen strongly advocated for a comprehensive update to the board rules and regulations to remove all gendered language immediately. While a “piecemeal” approach has been suggested, addressing these changes only as they arise is inefficient and risks leaving outdated language in place indefinitely. A universal update ensures consistency, inclusivity, and professional alignment across all our governing documents at once.

MOTION:	Ms. D’Antonio and Ms. Wong moved to direct Board staff to prepare regulatory options to achieve gender neutral language in existing regulations and present it to the Board for review and consideration.
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				

Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson	X				
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				
Christina Wong	X				

IX. Executive Officer's Report

A. Personnel

Mr. Moore reported that there are currently no vacancies. The Board extended its best wishes to Board Liaison Celina Calderone, who is retiring after facilitating 101 Board meetings and serving 65 board members throughout her career.

During Public Comment, former Board member Kathy Jones Irish extended her congratulations to Celina Calderone on her retirement.

B. ABET

No report given.

C. Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG)

1. April 9–11, 2026, Council of Examiners Workshop, Branson, MO – Delegate
 - a. Subject Matter Expert Funding Status for Out-of-State Travel
Mr. Moore reported that the Board has chosen Ms. Mathieson to attend the workshop and the out-of-state request has been submitted for approval.

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

1. April 30-May 2, 2026, Western Zone Interim Meeting, Bend, OR
 - a. Funded Delegate Status
The Out-of-state travel request has been submitted.
 - b. Meeting News and Updates
Mr. Moore reported that several charges are currently under discussion, though no formal motions have been brought forward at this time. Key topics include: a possible geospatial mapping examination, formerly referred to as mapping science exam; a motion regarding member board administrators being placed on the Board of Directors; the Structural Engineering Task Force has a charge to develop significant structures in model laws; and an election for the Zone Vice-President as discussed at the January meeting and a Zone Assistant Vice-President. Ms. Wong reported that the nominations for those two positions have closed and Western Zone has a slate of nominations.

- c. Nomination of Associate Members - Brook Grabowski, Enforcement Manager and Dawn Hall, Administrative Unit Manager. **(Possible Action)**

MOTION:	Vice-President Ruffino and Ms. D'Antonio moved to approve nominations for both Brook Grabowski and Dawn Hall to become Associate Members of the California Board with NCEES.
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				
Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson	X				
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				
Christina Wong	X				

- d. Discussion on Recommendations to NCEES for Funding Committee Chairs to Attend NCEES Interim and Annual Meetings. **(Possible Action)**

MOTION:	Vice-President Ruffino and Ms. Mathieson moved to recommend to NCEES President-Elect, to assign a charge to the appropriate committee to study the feasibility of funding national committee chairs to all zone interim meetings and report back to the council.
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				
Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson	X				
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				

Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				
Christina Wong	X				

Vice-President Ruffino requested that staff place an agenda item on the May 2026 agenda to nominate him for NCEES Treasurer.

X. President's Report/Board Member Activities

Ms. Mathieson reported that she completed her Form 700.

Mr. Hartley reported that he and Senior Registrar Land Surveyor Dallas Sweeney spoke at the Fresno State Geomatics Conference in January about the path to licensure and it was well received.

Ms. Wong attended the NCEES national Committee on Finance meeting on February 17th. There will be a full Finance Committee meeting next week and the Western Zone nominating committee meeting.

Vice-President Ruffino reported that he attended DCA's vice-president training and also the 2026 State of the Council meeting for NCEES.

President Martinez requested volunteers to serve as the nominating committee for selection of a Board President and Vice President for 2026-27 and provide a nomination slate at the May 14-15, 2026 Board meeting for discussion and election. Past Presidents Christina Wong and Mike Hartley volunteered to be the nominating committee

XI. Approval of Meeting Minutes (Possible Action)

A. Approval of January 15, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION:	Dr. Amistad and Mr. Hartley moved to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2026 Board meeting.
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				
Michael Hartley	X				
Betsy Mathieson			X		
Wilfredo Sanchez	X				
Fermin Villegas	X				
Cliff Waldeck	X				

Christina Wong	X				
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XII. 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

XIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

PUBLIC PRESENT

Abraham Hessabi, PECCG
 William Estepa, ACEC
 Krystinne Mica, SEAOB
 Rob Carrion, OE3
 Alberto Felix, OE3