

By: Watson, et al.

S.B. No. 609

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the continuation and functions of the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 1002.003, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 1002.003. APPLICATION OF SUNSET ACT. The Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists is subject to Chapter 325, Government Code (Texas Sunset Act). Unless continued in existence as provided by that chapter, the board is abolished and this chapter expires September 1, 2025 [~~2019~~].

SECTION 2. Section 1002.057, Occupations Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (a-1) to read as follows:

(a) The governor shall designate a member of the board as the presiding officer of the board to serve in that capacity at the pleasure of the governor.

(a-1) The board shall elect biennially from its own membership an [~~a presiding officer,~~] assistant presiding officer[~~7~~] and a secretary-treasurer. A member may not hold a position described by this subsection [~~one of these positions~~] for more than two consecutive two-year periods. A member serves in a [~~the~~] position described by this subsection at the will of the board and may be removed from that [~~the~~] position by a two-thirds majority

1 vote of the board.

2 SECTION 3. Section 1002.060, Occupations Code, is amended  
3 by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (d) to read as  
4 follows:

5 (b) The training program must provide the person with  
6 information regarding:

7 (1) the law governing board operations [~~legislation~~  
8 ~~that created the board~~];

9 (2) the board's programs, functions, rules, and budget  
10 ~~[operated by the board]~~;

11 (3) the scope of and limitations on the rulemaking  
12 authority of the board [~~role and functions of the board~~];

13 (4) the types of board rules, interpretations, and  
14 enforcement actions that may implicate federal antitrust law by  
15 limiting competition or impacting prices charged by persons engaged  
16 in a profession or business the board regulates, including rules,  
17 interpretations, and enforcement actions that:

18 (A) regulate the scope of practice of persons in  
19 a profession or business the board regulates;

20 (B) restrict advertising by persons in a  
21 profession or business the board regulates;

22 (C) affect the price of goods or services  
23 provided by persons in a profession or business the board  
24 regulates; and

25 (D) restrict participation in a profession or  
26 business the board regulates [~~rules of the board, with an emphasis~~  
27 ~~on the rules that relate to disciplinary and investigative~~

1 authority];

2 (5) ~~[the current budget for the board,~~  
3 ~~(6)]~~ the results of the most recent formal audit of the  
4 board;

5 (6) ~~(7)]~~ the requirements of:

6 (A) laws relating to ~~[the]~~ open meetings, ~~[law,~~  
7 ~~Chapter 551, Government Code,~~

8 ~~(B) the]~~ public information, ~~[law, Chapter 552,~~  
9 ~~Government Code,~~

10 ~~(C) the]~~ administrative procedure, and  
11 disclosure of conflicts of interest ~~[law, Chapter 2001, Government~~  
12 ~~Code]; and~~

13 (B) ~~(D)]~~ other laws applicable to members of a  
14 state policymaking body in performing their duties ~~[relating to~~  
15 ~~public officials, including conflict-of-interest laws]; and~~

16 (7) ~~(8)]~~ any applicable ethics policies adopted by  
17 the board or the Texas Ethics Commission.

18 (d) The executive director of the board shall create a  
19 training manual that includes the information required by  
20 Subsection (b). The executive director shall distribute a copy of  
21 the training manual annually to each member of the board. Each  
22 member of the board shall sign and submit to the executive director  
23 a statement acknowledging that the member received and has reviewed  
24 the training manual.

25 SECTION 4. Subchapter D, Chapter 1002, Occupations Code, is  
26 amended by adding Section 1002.1511 to read as follows:

27 Sec. 1002.1511. NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING; ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE

1 RESOLUTION. (a) The board shall develop a policy to encourage the  
2 use of:

3 (1) negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter  
4 2008, Government Code, for the adoption of board rules; and

5 (2) appropriate alternative dispute resolution  
6 procedures under Chapter 2009, Government Code, to assist in the  
7 resolution of internal and external disputes under the board's  
8 jurisdiction.

9 (b) The board's procedures relating to alternative dispute  
10 resolution must conform, to the extent possible, to any model  
11 guidelines issued by the State Office of Administrative Hearings  
12 for the use of alternative dispute resolution by state agencies.

13 (c) The board shall:

14 (1) coordinate the implementation of the policy  
15 adopted under Subsection (a);

16 (2) provide training as needed to implement the  
17 procedures for negotiated rulemaking or alternative dispute  
18 resolution; and

19 (3) collect data concerning the effectiveness of those  
20 procedures.

21 SECTION 5. Section 1002.204(a), Occupations Code, is  
22 amended to read as follows:

23 (a) The board shall maintain a system to promptly and  
24 efficiently act on complaints filed with the board. The board shall  
25 provide to the person filing the complaint and to each person who is  
26 a subject of the complaint a copy of the board's policies and  
27 procedures relating to complaint investigation and resolution.

1 SECTION 6. Sections 1002.253(a) and (c), Occupations Code,  
2 are amended to read as follows:

3 (a) An applicant for a license under this chapter, including  
4 an applicant for a temporary or reciprocal license, must apply on a  
5 form prescribed by the board that is signed [~~and sworn to~~] by the  
6 applicant [~~before a notary public~~].

7 (c) The application must be accompanied by[+]

8 [~~(1) not fewer than five reference letters, of which~~  
9 ~~not fewer than three are from geoscientists, or other professionals~~  
10 ~~acceptable to the board, who have personal knowledge of the~~  
11 ~~applicant's relevant work experience; and~~

12 [~~(2)~~] the appropriate application fee.

13 SECTION 7. Section 1002.255(a), Occupations Code, is  
14 amended to read as follows:

15 (a) To be eligible for a license under this chapter, an  
16 applicant must:

17 (1) be of good moral and ethical character as  
18 [~~attested to by letters of reference submitted in behalf of the~~  
19 ~~applicant or as otherwise~~] determined by the board;

20 (2) have:

21 (A) graduated from a course of study in a  
22 discipline of geoscience satisfactory to the board that consists of  
23 at least four years of study and includes at least 30 semester hours  
24 or 45 quarter hours of credit in geoscience, of which at least 20  
25 semester hours or 30 quarter hours of credit must be in upper-level  
26 college courses in that discipline; or

27 (B) satisfactorily completed other equivalent

1 educational requirements as determined by the board;

2 (3) have a documented record of at least five years of  
3 qualifying work experience, as provided by Section 1002.256, that  
4 demonstrates that the applicant is qualified to assume responsible  
5 charge of geoscientific work;

6 (4) pass an examination required by the board covering  
7 the fundamentals and practice of the appropriate discipline of  
8 geoscience; and

9 (5) meet any other requirements established by the  
10 board.

11 SECTION 8. Section 1002.260, Occupations Code, is amended  
12 to read as follows:

13 Sec. 1002.260. CONFIDENTIALITY OF CERTAIN INFORMATION. A  
14 statement made by a person who provides [~~a reference for an~~  
15 ~~applicant for a license under this chapter or provides~~] any  
16 information compiled by or submitted to the board relating to an  
17 applicant is privileged and confidential and may be used only by the  
18 board or an employee or agent of the board who is directly involved  
19 in the application or licensure process. Confidential information  
20 under this section is not subject to discovery, subpoena, or other  
21 disclosure in any proceeding.

22 SECTION 9. Section 1002.452(b), Occupations Code, is  
23 amended to read as follows:

24 (b) The amount of the penalty may not exceed \$1,500 [~~\$100~~]  
25 for each violation. Each day a violation continues or occurs is a  
26 separate violation for purposes of imposing a penalty.

27 SECTION 10. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of

1 this section, Section 1002.060, Occupations Code, as amended by  
2 this Act, applies to a member of the Texas Board of Professional  
3 Geoscientists appointed before, on, or after the effective date of  
4 this Act.

5 (b) A member of the Texas Board of Professional  
6 Geoscientists who, before the effective date of this Act, completed  
7 the training program required by Section 1002.060, Occupations  
8 Code, as that law existed before the effective date of this Act, is  
9 required to complete additional training only on subjects added by  
10 this Act to the training program as required by Section 1002.060,  
11 Occupations Code, as amended by this Act. A board member described  
12 by this subsection may not vote, deliberate, or be counted as a  
13 member in attendance at a meeting of the board held on or after  
14 December 1, 2019, until the member completes the additional  
15 training.

16 SECTION 11. Sections 1002.253 and 1002.255, Occupations  
17 Code, as amended by this Act, apply only to an application for a  
18 license to practice geoscience filed on or after the effective date  
19 of this Act. An application for a license filed before the  
20 effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the  
21 date the application was filed, and the former law is continued in  
22 effect for that purpose.

23 SECTION 12. As soon as practicable after the effective date  
24 of this Act, the governor shall designate a member of the Texas  
25 Board of Professional Geoscientists as the presiding officer of the  
26 board pursuant to Section 1002.057, Occupations Code, as amended by  
27 this Act.

1           SECTION 13. Section [1002.452](#), Occupations Code, as amended  
2 by this Act, applies only to conduct that occurs on or after the  
3 effective date of this Act. Conduct that occurs before the  
4 effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the  
5 date the conduct occurred, and the former law is continued in effect  
6 for that purpose.

7           SECTION 14. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.