



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS

ILLINOIS/INDIANA SECTION HEADQUARTERS
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State Senator Pam Althoff
309H Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Position Statement: AGAINST

SB01821---- Repeal of the Professional Geologist Licensing Act

Request for Action

The Illinois Chapter of the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG) respectfully requests that the 'Professional Geologist Licensing Act' and all associated references to the profession of Geology be stricken from all language within SB01821.

Who are we?

The AIPG is a professional organization that represents Illinois Licensed Professional Geologists. Our members include geologists working for the Illinois State Geological Survey, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Universities, Illinois regulatory agencies, Illinois consulting firms, and Illinois businesses, including energy and mineral industries.

The Illinois/Indiana Section of AIPG is an organization that promotes ethics, integrity and competence in the profession of geology. AIPG was founded in 1963 and is the largest association dedicated to promoting geology as a profession. One of the primary goals of our Section is to act as an advocacy group for Illinois Licensed Professional Geologists. We are a non-profit organization with no paid staff and more than 300 active members within the section.

Background

In 2015, AIPG and Chemical Industry Council of Illinois along with other organizations and individuals demonstrated to the State of Illinois that extension of the of the Professional Geologist Licensing Act (Act) was necessary to protect public health, safety and the wellbeing of Illinois citizens. The Act revisions also established the Geologist Intern updated the Act current standards of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, including increasing the maximum civil penalty per violation.

While the AIPG recognizes that the Professional Geologists do not generate a significant number of complaints that require disciplinary action, it is a very relevant profession for regulation due to the close ties to public health, safety, and the well-being of Illinois citizens. Licensed geologists are required to meet minimum experience requirements and are required to pass two examinations that validate technical competency.

AIPG believes that repeal of the Geology Act is in direct contradiction to Governor Rauner's 7/10/15 signing of SB 749 that extended of the Professional Geologist Licensing Act through 2026. It's worth noting that SB 749 was passed unanimously in the House (116 "yes", 0 "no") and in the Senate (51 "yes", 0 "no").

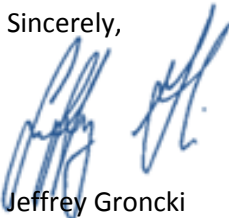
The original Act was passed in 1995 because the practice of professional geology in the State of Illinois affects the public health, safety, and well-being of its citizens. The Act found that:

- Governmental bodies have come to rely upon advice from geologists when formulating laws and policies to protect the environment and the safety, property, and well-being of the citizens of Illinois.
- Some federal and State regulations require that geological investigations be performed and the geological conditions be interpreted. For example, Licensed Professional Geologists are included in Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) regulations for the Petroleum Underground Storage Tank program, the Site Remediation Program, and the Clean Construction or Demolition Debris program.
- Geologists practicing under the Act conduct, or are responsible for:
 - mapping, sampling, and analysis of earth materials;
 - interpretation of data, and the preparation of oral or written testimony regarding the probable geological causes of events;
 - planning, review, and supervision of data gathering activities;
 - interpretation of geological data gathered by direct and indirect means;
 - preparation and interpretation of geological maps, cross-sections, interpretive maps and reports for the purpose of determining regional or site specific geological conditions;
 - planning, review, and supervision of data gathering activities and interpretation of data on regional or site specific geological characteristics affecting groundwater or energy extraction (fracking);
 - interpreting geological conditions on the surface of the Earth and at depth in the Earth for the purpose of determining whether those conditions correspond to a geologic map of the site or a legally specified geological requirement for the site, and;
 - conducting environmental property audits.
- Expert opinions regarding the geological conditions of an area provided to regulatory bodies, State or local governmental agencies, and the public can have significant impacts on the environmental quality of Illinois and on the safety, property use and value, and well-being of its citizens.
- On a worldwide basis, natural geological events such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides annually cause billions of dollars in property losses and the deaths of thousands of persons. This loss of life and property, in many instances, has been reduced or largely avoided when advice provided by geologists has been accepted and appropriately acted upon in time by governmental bodies and citizens.
- The environment and the safety, property, and well-being of the citizens of this State are significantly threatened by natural geological hazards such as earthquakes within the New Madrid and Wabash Valley Seismic Zones, flooding, landslides, karst collapse, and coastal erosion.
- The environment and the safety, property, and well-being of the citizens of Illinois also are significantly threatened by geological hazards related to the acts of humans such as contamination of groundwater resources and mine subsidence.

- The advice of geologists is needed to guide the governmental bodies and the citizens of this State toward an appropriate level of preparedness for a future major earthquake within the New Madrid or Wabash Valley Seismic Zones and to assist the citizens and governmental bodies of this State in reducing their exposure to risks to the environment and to their safety, property, and well-being from other geological hazards, both natural and human-caused.
- As in the case with other professions that directly affect their safety, property, and well-being, the citizens of Illinois need assurance that persons offering the services of professional geologists are adequately trained and experienced and are practicing their profession in an ethical manner. Statutes and rules in this State indicate that certification through peer review by national professional organizations is not regarded as sufficient proof of competence and ethical practice for professions that affect the safety, property, and well-being of the citizens of this State. Therefore, certification by national professional organizations also should not be considered sufficient to protect the citizens of this State from possible harm from the practice of professional geology by inadequately trained and experienced, or unethical persons.
- In most cases where economic development is to occur a geologist has developed specific information and data to support the intended use and numerous aspects of its design. It is important to understand that many of those key design elements of are provided by geologist and are for the benefit of public safety and assure that any construction can be properly designed.

I am available to discuss the basis of this request if you have any questions. I am hopeful that you will strike all references to the Professional Geologist Licensing Act from all language within SB01821.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Groncki
AIPG Illinois/Indiana Section President



Craig McCammack
AIPG Illinois/Indiana Section Vice President