Update on teleconference with IDFPR, Illinois Senate Republican Staff, and Sen Pamela Althoff regarding repeal of Professional Geologist Act.

May 5, 2017

Summary - SB1821 will eliminate Professional Geologist Act, remove requirements for professional geologists for regulatory work and USTs, etc. Nicholas McNeely amendments allow licensure but remove requirements for work to be performed by licensed professional geologists.

The administration Nick McNeelly offer weak arguments

* There have not been no instances of malfeasance - licensure deters malpractice
* No ethical misconduct – licensure deters malpractice
* No complaints - licensure deters malpractice
* 19 states do not have licensure – Illinois has very complex geology requiring competency
* Want to maximize practice of geology – but cannot identify a single instance where someone was not allowed to practice because of licensing. Not one.

Industry opinion

* Coal, aggregate, oil and gas industry, chemical engineers, local government want the Professional Geologist Act to remain as it currently stands but not IDFPR, Senator Althoff, or administration (Governor).
* Replaces Licensed Professional Geologist with Licensed Professional Engineer. Engineers are not educated, trained and have limited understanding of geology. Many of the environmental problems were made by engineers who did not understand or learn about local geology.
* Furthermore, work of Illinois geologists will not be recognized in other states if they only have AIPG certification. Also requires geologists from other states to obtain AIPG certification to practice in IL. Both restrictions complicate the practice of geology in IL.

Adverse impact to other legislation.

* Result of SB1821 (with amendments) will DIRECTLY undermine SB 0611 (Bennett) Mahomet Aquifer Protection Task Force Act. The McNeely amendments will allow unlicensed geologists with doubtful credentials to conduct work that will impact the aquifer, perhaps adversely to the detriment of communities, businesses, farms, and individuals who depend upon this high-quality water supply.

Conclusion

The McNeely Amendment to SB1821 is a deceptive “fix” which will adversely impact drinking water security of local aquifers, is unwanted by industry, and complicates practice of geology in Illinois.

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