



ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING GEOLOGISTS

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SECTION

"Serving Professionals in Engineering, Environmental and Ground-Water Geology"

April 7, 2005

The Honorable Paul Sweeny, Executive Officer

Board for Geologists and Geophysicists
2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 300A
Sacramento, CA 95833

Subject: Opposition to the Elimination of the California Specific Examination

Dear Executive Officer Sweeny,

The Association of Engineering Geologists, Southern California Section (AEGSoCal) opposes any plan to eliminate the California Specific Examination (CSE).

As you know, AEGSoCal represents the interests of environmental and engineering geologists in the southern third of the State of California. AEGSoCal opposes the elimination of the CSE because our membership has indicated there is not a compelling argument for that change and that California geology is special and unique, its practice can affect the safety and welfare of the public and it should be demonstrated as learned before one can practice in this Great State.

The conclusions discussed in this letter are the result of a simple survey (attached) sent to our membership regarding the CSE. This survey was prepared in order to assess the concerns and opinions of our members with respect to this issue. Over 60 geo-science professionals from Mammoth Lakes to San Diego responded.

Overall, the majority of our membership believes the CSE should not only be retained, but improved, by riding the exam of "geo-trivia", i.e., "What is the State fossil" and providing more questions specific to California's laws and regulations, seismic hazard zones, earthquake fault zones, codes and geology. Many members believe that providing such relevant questions would eliminate the need for a longer exam, which was one of the questions posed.

With respect to being "Trade Restrictive" concerning Out-of-State geologists, our membership believes that although geology can be learned "along the way" they stated the CSE is a valuable tool because it compels geologists to get up to speed on many State specific geo-science issues. Many members also stated that studying for the exam establishes a database such that resources are available or can be readily found for future reference. In essence, most respondents believe the exam is not trade restrictive and should be taken by any geologist who wishes to practice in this State. In conjunction, many professionals also thought the exam should be provided more than once a year because the current format is too restrictive to those that fail.



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Finally, another item of discussion was the possibility of a Study Manual, prepared by the State or perhaps referenced by the State that a person could easily obtain in order to have a clearer picture of what would be included on the test. Many members believe this is a fine way to introduce people to what is considered valuable to having a minimum understanding of California geology. One respondent extended this concept to include that the BGG could offer the exam on-line. It would force the BGG to write thoughtful exams because the concept of Google exposes the "California State fossil" variety of question as worthless.

Based on the responses to our survey, it seems clear that if the BGG is seriously considering eliminating the CSE, the BGG should provide the current profession with compelling arguments that would support that decision, because practicing professionals who responded to our survey believe California is special and unique, and that there are many options for positive change to the exam instead of a 'stay or go only' solution.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Matthew Hawley, PG 6752, CEG 2122
Chair, Association of Engineering Geologists, Southern California Section
(805) 579-3434

Cc: Examination Committee



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Questions Regarding the California Specific Examination

Would changing the trivial nature of the exam make it better? i.e., with more stuff about codes, A-P Zones, Siesmic H Zones, etc. and not "what is the State mineral?"

Would making the exam longer make it better?

Would having a pamphlet, like the one the DMV gives prospective drivers, make it better such that you knew at least those questions or close derivatives would be on the test?

Do you think CA is special and needs outside geologists, i.e. ones from Arkansas or Florida, etc. to pass the test in order to work in this State?

Do you think CA has unique geology that should be 'learned' before a geologist practices in the State or can it be 'learned' along the way?

Would administering the test more than once a year make the process more worthy?

Do you believe the CSE should be eliminated?

Thank You for your input – Matt H. AEG SoCal Section Chair
