

BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS, WETLAND PROFESSIONALS and
GEOLOGISTS MEETING MINUTES

The Soil Scientist Workgroup Section Committee of the Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists met on August 27, 2026, at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), 9960 Mayland Drive, Richmond, Virginia, with the following members present for all or part of the meeting:

Soil Scientist
Jay Conta
Alexis Jones
Richard Michniak

Wetland Delineators
Emily Salkind

Geologist
Ernest Beasley

Staff present for all or part of the meeting were:

Kate Nosbisch, Executive Director
Summer Saunders, Licensing Operations Administrator
Kyle Mathews, Regulatory Operations Administrator
Davon Jones, Administrative Coordinator
Rhonda Starr, Examination Services Coordinator
Brandon Bouknight, Examination Data Administrator
Jennifer Sayegh, Policy and Legislative Affairs Manager

Laura McClintock, Director, and Steve Kirschner, LRPD Director were not present with regret.

Members of the audience:
None

Ms. Jones called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Ms. Jones advised the Committee of the emergency evacuation and 9-1-1 procedures.

**Emergency
Evacuation**

Mr. Conta moved to approve the agenda with an amendment to add Welcome and Introductions before Public Comment Period. Mr. Beasley seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Conta, Jones, Michniak, Salkind, and Beasley.

**Approval of
Agenda**

Ms. Nosbisch welcomed Summer Saunders, who recently joined the section from the Real Estate Section and replaced Ecila Williams. Ms. Nosbisch also welcomed Brandon Bouknight and Rhonda Starr from DPOR's Examination Section.

**Welcome and
Introductions**

There was no one present for public comments.

**Public Comment
Period**

The Workgroup reviewed Virginia's soil scientist licensure and examination requirements, focusing on low pass rates for the national Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) examinations, declining participation, workforce concerns, examination costs, and whether the Professional Practice examination appropriately measures minimum competency. Members discussed alternatives to the national examination but recognized the significant cost and resources required to develop and maintain a Virginia-specific examination. The Workgroup agreed to allow SSSA's ongoing examination revisions time to demonstrate results while pursuing proactive measures, including monitoring pass rates and candidate numbers, expanding examination-preparation resources, and increasing outreach to colleges, universities, and prospective soil scientists. Members also discussed working with the professional association to create an examination scholarship program to help offset examination fees and encourage more qualified candidates to pursue licensure. Ms. Nosbisch and Ms. Jones will continue coordinating with SSSA and professional stakeholders and report additional information to the Board.

Soil Scientist
Licensure and
Examination
Requirements
Review

Mr. Mathews provided an informational update regarding changes to soil scientist continuing education requirements, including the requirement for eight contact hours per renewal cycle. The Workgroup discussed accessible continuing education opportunities and outreach efforts to increase awareness of soil science as a profession.

Other Business

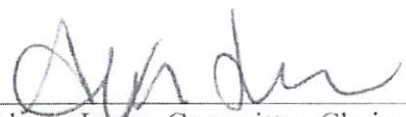
Ms. Nosbisch also provided an update regarding the upcoming Board Member Training Conference.

Conflict of Interest forms and travel vouchers were completed by all board members present.

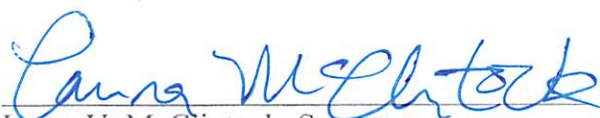
Conflict of Interest
Forms/Travel
Vouchers

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

Adjourn



Alexis Jones, Committee Chair



Laura V. McClintock, Secretary

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Ernest Beasley
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Soil Scientist Committee Meeting August 27, 2026

5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

None

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

N/A

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

N/A

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.

Signature

Date

[Signature]

8/27/26

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Jay Conta
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Soil Scientist Committee Meeting August 27, 2026

5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.

Jay F. Conta
Signature

Aug 27, 2026
Date

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government

1. Name: Alexis E. Jones
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Soil Scientist Workgroup Committee Meeting August 27, 2026

5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

no

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

no

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

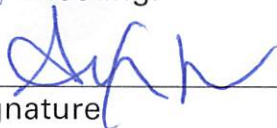
or

☒ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.

Signature

Date



8/27/2026

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Richard Michniak
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Soil Scientist Committee Meeting August 27, 2026

5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

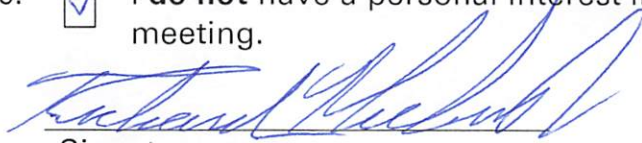
I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

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☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.


Signature

8/27/26
Date

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Emily Salkind
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Soil Scientist Committee Meeting August 27, 2026

5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

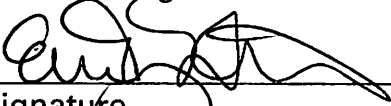
I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

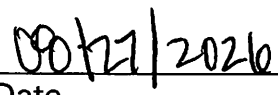
or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.



Signature



Date