

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

The Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists met on March 9, 2026, at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), 9960 Mayland Drive, Richmond, Virginia.

Members present for all or part of the meeting:

Citizens

Steven Yob

Geologists

Matt Heller

Shannon Lukens

Soil Scientists

Jay Conta

Alexis Jones

Richard Michniak

Wetland Delineators

Justin Brown

Emily Drahos

Emily Salkind

Members absent from the meeting with regrets:

Citizens

Cayman Lowe

Geologists

Ernest Beasley

John Pollard

Staff present for all or part of the meeting were:

Laura McClintock, Director

Steve Kirschner, LRPD Director

Kate Nosbisch, Executive Director

Davon Jones, Administrative Coordinator

Ecila Williams, Licensing Operations Administrator

Kyle Mathews, Regulatory Operations Administrator

Joe Haughwout, Regulatory Affairs Manager

Jennifer Sayegh, Policy & Legislative Affairs Manager

Josh Laws, Assistant Attorney General, was present from the office of the Attorney General.

Jackson Dyer, BPOR Liaison, was present from the Board of Professional and Occupational Regulation.

Greg Emerson, Executive Director - Examinations, was not present at the meeting with regrets.

Members of the audience:

Robin Bedenbaugh, *Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals*

Thaddeus Kraska, *Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals*

Elijah Wright, *Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals*

Mr. Brown, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Call to Order

Mr. Brown and Ms. Nosbisch advised the Board of the emergency evacuation procedures.

Emergency Evacuation

Ms. Jones moved to approve the agenda with the addition of Board Member Training as Item VI. Mr. Heller seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Salkind and Yob.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Lukens moved to approve the PSSWPG Board Meeting, December 2, 2025. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Salkind and Yob.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Nosbisch welcomed and introduced Ms. Laura McClintock as the new Director, Ms. Jessica Looman as the new Secretary of Labor, Ms. Emily Salkind as the new Wetland Delineator Board Member, Mr. Jackson Dyer as the new Board for Professional and Occupation Regulation (BPOR) Liaison Member and Mr. Kyle Mathews as the new Regulatory Operations Administrator. Board members, DPOR staff, and Counsel introduced themselves.

Welcome and Introductions

Thaddeus Kraska addressed the Board regarding a February 2, 2026, briefing memorandum. He requested clarification on the Board's determinations related to comparable scope of practice in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and New Hampshire, and sought greater transparency regarding the Universal License Recognition (ULR) process, including certifications issued and eligibility procedures.

Public Comment Period

Elijah Wright addressed the board in support of the issues raised by the Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals. He emphasized the importance of clarity and consistency in scope-of-practice determinations under the Universal License Recognition process and encouraged the Board to consider the benefits of remote participation policies for Board members.

Robin Bedenbaugh addressed the Board regarding concerns related to wetland delineation work and certification practices. He referenced an example involving delineation work performed by an individual certified through the Universal License Recognition process and urged the Board to maintain consistent professional standards and certification requirements.

The Board received and reviewed an email from Thaddeus Kraska, Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals, dated February 2, 2026, for informational purposes.

Communication

Ms. Nosbisch provided an update for informational purposes.

Examinations Update

Ms. Nosbisch stated the Executive Director Report was provided for informational purposes.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Mathews provided an update on the ongoing General Regulatory Review, noting that the review process remains in progress and that comments received during the review period will be evaluated as part of the regulatory development process. Mr. Mathews also discussed the status of legislative amendments associated with House Bill 1835, which relates to geology licensure requirements and implementation of the regulatory framework for professional geologists in Virginia. Additionally, the Board reviewed proposed revisions to Guidance Document 6029.

Regulatory Update

Ms. Jones moved to approve the amendment to Guidance Document 6029 as presented. Ms. Drahos seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Salkind and Yob.

Ms. Sayegh provided a comprehensive legislative update regarding several bills affecting DPOR and the professions regulated by the Board. The update included legislation related to revisions to fee adjustment procedures for regulatory boards, expanded authority for boards to address minor disciplinary matters, and changes to quorum requirements for certain regulatory boards. Ms. Sayegh also discussed technical and administrative statutory updates affecting regulated professions, clarification of licensure requirements and exemptions related to geologists, and legislation impacting the definition of professional services and continuing education requirements. Ms. Sayegh noted that several of the bills discussed had passed both chambers of the General Assembly and were awaiting action by the Governor. Board members discussed the potential impacts of the legislation, including considerations related to quorum requirements and board governance.

General Assembly Update

Mr. Kirschner presented to the Board an example policy governing remote participation by Board members in accordance with Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements. Mr. Kirschner explained that regulatory boards may adopt policies allowing limited remote participation under specific circumstances; however, a physical quorum must still be present to conduct official business. Board members discussed the potential benefits and limitations of adopting such a policy, including considerations related to available technology, public access to meetings, and compliance with FOIA requirements. No action was taken, and Mr. Kirschner advised that a draft policy could be prepared for the Board's consideration at a future meeting if the Board wishes to pursue adoption.

Remote Meeting Attendance by Board Members Policy

Ms. Nosbisch presented information to the Board regarding prior determinations on whether certain states have a scope of practice comparable to Virginia for purposes of Universal License Recognition. The discussion focused on clarifying language recorded on October 16, 2025, meeting minutes.

**Clarification of
ULR License
Scope of Practice
from October 16,
2025**

Ms. Drahos moved that the Board separate and clarify the Universal License Recognition determinations from October 16, 2025, meeting minutes so that the actions stand independently in the record. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Salkind and Yob.

Determination from October 16, 2025, were as follows:

The Board determined that Wisconsin does not have a scope of practice substantially similar to Virginia for purposes of Universal License Recognition.

The Board determined that Minnesota does not have a scope of practice substantially similar to Virginia for purposes of Universal License Recognition.

The Board determined that New Hampshire has a scope of practice substantially similar to Virginia for purposes of Universal License Recognition.

Ms. Jones moved that the Board confirm that Wisconsin and Minnesota do not have a scope of practice substantially similar to Virginia and that New Hampshire does have a scope of practice substantially similar to Virginia for purposes of Universal License Recognition. Ms. Drahos seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Salkind and Yob.

Ms. Nosbisch shared correspondence from the Department of Environmental Quality regarding wastewater inspection requirements. The information was provided for awareness and informational purposes.

**DEQ -
Clarification
Regarding
Inspection
Requirements for
Wastewater**

Ms. Nosbisch and Ms. Jones provided an update regarding ongoing discussions with the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) concerning examination performance and potential revisions to the soil science examination. The update included discussion of possible collaboration with professional organizations, current examination development practices, and future evaluation of licensing requirements. The Board discussed monitoring examination outcomes and continuing engagement with relevant professional organizations.

**Soil Scientists
Update**

Ms. Nosbisch updated the Board that the Board's prior decision to pursue outsourcing options for the Wetland Professional examination. Ms. Nosbisch reported she is working with the exam section to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) to go out to bid.

**Wetland
Professionals
Update**

Ms. Nosbisch shared the Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG) Spring Workshop would be held in Branson, MO in April 9-11, 2026. Staff provided an update regarding the development and administration of the national geology examination and ongoing collaboration with professional organizations responsible for examination content, review, and maintenance.

Geologists Update

Mr. Brown informed the board of the licensee counts as of January 1, 2026:
Soil Scientists – 75; Wetland Delineators – 152; Geologists – 901.

**License and
Certified
Population**

Ms. Nosbisch conducted election of officers. Ms. Lukens moved to nominate Ms. Jones as Chair. Mr. Brown seconded. As there were no other nominations from the floor, nominations were closed and the nomination of Ms. Jones was unanimously approved by: Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Salkind and Yob.

Election of Officers

Mr. Heller moved to nominate Ms. Lukens to Vice Chair. Mr. Yob seconded. As there were no other nominations from the floor, nominations were closed and the nomination of Mr. Lukens was unanimously approved by: Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Salkind and Yob.

The newly elected officers will assume their positions effective July 1, 2026.

The Board recessed from 11:30 a.m. to 11:45 p.m.

Recess

Mr. Laws departed the meeting at 11:48 a.m.

**Departure of
Assistant Attorney
General**

Ms. Jones departed the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

**Departure of
Board Member**

Board members participated in training covering regulatory board responsibilities, conflict-of-interest requirements, public meeting procedures, disciplinary processes, and other governance requirements under Virginia law. The training was provided to ensure Board members understand their duties and responsibilities as members of a public regulatory body.

**Board Member
Training**

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 12:27 p.m.

Adjourn

Justin T. Brown, Chair

Laura V. McClintock, Secretary

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