

# California Council of Geoscience Organizations

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Greetings:

September 14-2009

The Board of Geologists and Geophysicists (BGG) was eliminated by legislation by the California legislature and governor, as part of a reduction of many boards in late July 2009. Although the BGG was self funding, the need to consolidate government seemed to be the order of business when the BGG elimination language was added at the last minute to the California budget legislation. No other boards were completely eliminated, although several were changed, renamed or merged. The CCGO held an emergency meeting on September 12, 2009 to review the options and take action.

Taken from the BGG web site, it was refreshing to see why the BGG was formed: It was created by statute in 1968, the independent Board for Geologists and Geophysicists protects the public by (i) examining and licensing only fully qualified professionals; (ii) promulgating and enforcing high professional standards commensurate with the considerable technical challenges associated with preventing or mitigating potential risks to human health, safety and the environment, and maintaining and improving California's critical infrastructure – e.g., schools, hospitals and transportation – housing, water supply, flood control, community well-being and economic development, waste disposal, enjoyment of open space and private property, and emergency preparedness; and (iii) taking effective and appropriate disciplinary action against unlicensed activity in these areas where geology and geophysics play such crucial roles.

The participants in the CCGO meeting on September 12, 2009 in Oakland, California included Dave Abbott, Don Ashton, Tom Barry, Jim Jacobs, Laurent Meillier, Charles Nestle, Erik Olsborg, George Reid. Phone attendees included Frank Jordan, Bill Motzer, John Pfeiffer, Mark Rogers, and Robert Sydnor. Thank you to those who were able to participate!

## Here is What We Know:

- BGG was eliminated and moved to the Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (BPELS);
- BPELS is required to administer the Geologists and Geophysicists Act;
- Two staff members (person years) will be transferred from the BGG to BPELS, but it is unknown who will be transferred;
- The BGG transfer occurs on Oct. 23, 2009;
- The Dept. of Consumer Affairs and Dept. of Finance probably want to keep BGG revenues, so the functions are not likely to go away.
- There are many concerns that were discussed in the CCGO meeting.

Actions: Based on the information, the CCGO board voted unanimously to proceed with the following actions:

1) Working with other groups, CCGO supports the filing a injunction requesting temporary relief (based on public safety affected and the lack of public participation in the process). CCGO unanimously voted to support the injunction and provided \$500 of financial support for the efforts. Individuals can support the process which could cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$25,000. Send donations made out to: AEGSC-Political Action Fund 1772-J East Avenida De Los Arboles, PMB # 304; Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

2) CCGO did encourage the BGG to send out notifications on the details of the changes and how it will affect professional geologists. Both George Reid and Jim Jacobs called the BGG separately on September 14, 2009, only to find out that the BGG has no intentions of notifying licensed geologists about the changes until after the October 23, 2009 transfer of the BGG functions to BPELS. The BGG staff response and attitude was less than professional.

3) CCGO will contact BPELS and try to work with the Executive Officer for a smooth transition and to open the channels of communication before, during and after the transfer of the BGG functions to the BPELS on October 23, 2009. If a successful integration of geologists into the engineers and land surveyors board occurs, it is possible that a technical design board could be formed, possibly allowing geologists more opportunities.

4) CCGO will continue to visit Sacramento legislators to frame legislation as public safety issue. CCGO will try to re-establish the BGG based on public safety, environmental concerns, that the elimination of the BGG had no public

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input, and there is no tax savings by eliminating the BGG. This option will occur over several years and is more likely to be successful with a new governor and new legislators.

5) CCGO will develop a public relations campaign explaining the importance of competent geologists and geophysicists to public safety and environmental issues. The potential damage from the Hayward fault, and the 1906 San Francisco earth quake highlights the need for geologic knowledge and properly licensed professionals to provide engineering and geologic insights. The public might also be interested that the elimination of the BGG occurred without any public participation, or any savings of tax payer money. Local newspapers, television and radio programs on KGO and KCBS (news talk stations) might have an interest. Colleges and university professors might be interested in the elimination of the board as well, as the professional regard for geologists has been lowered. Local organizations, such as the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the USGS, California Geologic Survey and the University of California San Diego's Public Interest Law group may also help to support the issue as well.

6) CCGO will contact individuals and large companies for donations to support the above listed activities.

7) A follow-up conference call will occur on Monday September 21 at 10 am. Please call 309-946-5255 and use the pass code 837345 to participate.

A Notice of commendation from CCGO to Charles Nestle was given for his excellent summary of actions about the BGG and all the hundreds of hours that volunteered for the geology profession this year. Charles Nestle can be reached at Phone: (626) 458-4923 or (626) 233-9260; [cnestle@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:cnestle@dpw.lacounty.gov)

## **CCGO Fund Raiser Meeting**

An October 13<sup>th</sup> 2009 event, hosted by Association of Engineering Geologists, San Francisco Section: Tuesday evening at Sinbad's Restaurant along the San Francisco Pier 2, Embarcadero; 6 p.m. cocktail hour, 7 p.m. dinner, 8 p.m. speaker. Donation for dinner for CCGO: \$50/person.

## **Understanding Volcanoes May Be the Key to Controlling Global Warming**

Our life-sustaining, oxygen-rich atmosphere was formed primarily by gases erupted from volcanoes. Without continued eruptions, most life on earth would soon vanish. Yet moderate sequences of large volcanic eruptions have cooled the earth incrementally into ice ages, high rates of eruptions have propelled the earth out of ice ages, and massive eruptions of flood basalts covering areas as large as Washington, Oregon, California and Nevada combined have caused widespread extinctions of the majority of species. We live in a delicate balance dependent in a significant way on changes in the rates and types of volcanism.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, man burning fossil fuels upset this balance. Man emitted as much sulfur dioxide as volcanoes emitted during the times of most-rapid warming at the end of the last ice age. The earth warmed rapidly. Between 1980 and 2000, man reduced sulfur emissions by 18% in an effort to reduce acid rain. The rapid rise in global temperatures ceased by 1998. Understanding how volcanoes have initiated abrupt climate change over the eons suggests ways for man to mitigate global warming during the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

About the Speaker: Dr. Peter L. Ward studied active volcanoes since 1963, received a B.A. from Dartmouth, a Ph.D. from Columbia, and worked 27 years with the U. S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park, California. He was a primary leader in developing and managing the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program. He received two national awards for a magazine about living safely with earthquakes that he wrote, produced, and distributed to 3.3 million families in northern California. In 1997 and 1998, he chaired the Working Group on Natural Disaster Information Systems at the White House. He has published widely on volcanoes, earthquakes, earthquake prediction, public warning, plate tectonics, the geology of western North America and now climate.

Thanks for your support.

-Jim Jacobs, CCGO President; [jimjacobs@ebsinfo.com](mailto:jimjacobs@ebsinfo.com); Phone: (415) 381-5195; Cell: (510) 590-1098