



**2015-2018**

**Board for  
Professional Engineers,  
Land Surveyors, and  
Geologists**

**Strategic Plan**

**Adopted: July 31, 2014**

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# California Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists

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## Message from the Board President

We are very pleased to present to you with our new strategic plan for 2015-2018. This plan represents the culmination of a huge effort and input by our stakeholders, staff, Board members, and Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), and represents our revised priorities, goals and the actions essential to achieve those goals.

The timing of the plan couldn't have been better, given the addition of ten new Board members during the last two years. The one-day DCA-facilitated planning workshop, attended by the Board members and staff, was a watershed moment for the Board. We collectively offered experience-based insights and constructively discussed ideas and recommendations for revisions to the plan. Changes, modifications, or new additions were developed by consensus. The collaborative process encouraged each participant to both support and engage in the strategic planning process, and to embrace the plan as a "living document" and support its implementation going forward.

We encourage everyone to reference the strategic plan as we perform our day-to-day duties, as it is an established agreement undergirded by clearly articulated and measurable outcomes and results. And because it is a "living" document, we now have carefully structured a framework to help us assess and adjust our approach and direction as we respond to future changes, both within the Board organization and externally. Further, we have the benefit of our collective understanding and agreement as to the Board's mission, vision, and goals that should support our continued commitment to be public-focused and to implement responsible decision-making, which remains our foremost concern.



Erik Zinn, P.G., C.E.G.  
2013-14 Board President



Kathy Jones Irish  
2014-15 Board President

## About the California Board

The California Legislature created the Board of Registration for Civil Engineers in 1929, following the failure of the St. Francis Dam in northern Los Angeles County. On March 12, 1928, the dam, which was located northeast of Castaic, suddenly gave way. A huge wall of water cascaded down the narrow valley of the Santa Clara River and when the water hit the town of Santa Paula, almost 50 miles downstream, the crest was still 25 feet high. The dam failure unleashed 12 billion gallons of water through the towns of Piru, Fillmore, Santa Paula, and Ventura before it reached the ocean. Lives lost numbered approximately 450; property damage was in the millions of dollars; 1,200 houses were demolished; and 10 bridges washed out. After the flood, inspection revealed that the dam was built on, and anchored to, a weak and faulted rock formation. The Legislature determined that the unregulated design of construction projects constituted a hazard to the public and passed laws to regulate civil engineering and to create the Board.

Although Civil Engineers first became licensed in 1929, Land Surveyors have been licensed in California since 1891 in accordance with an act to establish land surveying that was enacted March 31, 1891. That was the year the Legislature established the State Surveyor General. However, in 1933, the Legislature abolished that office and enacted the Professional Land Surveyors' Act. The Act expanded the Board's authority to include jurisdiction over licensing of land surveyors and regulation of surveying practices. Until then, local governments had been interpreting the laws governing subdivision maps and recordation of parcel boundaries in widely differing ways for many years. Many land surveyors ignored basic legal requirements concerning subdivision maps and survey records. Some counties allowed boundary monuments to be moved or even destroyed. Legal disputes over property boundaries cost the state and the public millions of dollars. Regulation of land surveyors brought about uniform enforcement of survey law and is in the best interests of the state and California consumers.

Over the years, the Board has experienced some major changes under the provisions of the Professional Engineers Act. The number of branches of engineering regulated by the Board has increased, and the status of some of the older branches has changed. When electrical and mechanical engineering were first covered by the registration law in 1947, the law only affected the use of the titles. In 1967, the Act was amended to regulate the practice of those branches, as

well as the titles. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Act was also amended to give the Board the right to accept additional branches of engineering into the registration program. The additional categories were for the purpose of regulating the use of the titles of those engineering branches. Between 1972 and 1975, the Board expanded the registration program to include nine additional branches of engineering under its jurisdiction. In 1986, at the Board's request, the authority to create new title registration branches was removed from the Act. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, four of the title registration branches were deregulated.

In 2009, legislation was enacted that eliminated the Board for Geologists and Geophysicists and transferred all of the duties, powers, purposes, responsibilities, and jurisdiction to regulate the practices of geology and geophysics to the Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. Effective January 1, 2011, the name of the Board was changed to the Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists.

The Board consists of 15 members (seven licensed members and eight public members) who are appointed to the Board for four-year terms. Each member may serve a maximum of two terms. The seven licensed members and six of the public members are appointed by the Governor. One public member is appointed by the Senate Rules Committee, and one public member is appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

# 2011-2014 Strategic Plan Accomplishments

- 1 The Board significantly reduced the aging of open investigations over 1 year old from 108 cases to 9 cases during Fiscal Year 2013-14.

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- 2 The Board restructured engineering, land surveying, and geology examination and application fees to provide cost savings to our applicants and licensees.

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- 3 All State-specific examinations were converted to computer-based testing (CBT), and the Board now offers flexible testing dates for these exams.

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- 4 The Board eliminated the 12-14 month backlog of cases awaiting the issuance of Administrative Citations and awaiting referral for formal disciplinary action during Fiscal Year 2012-13.

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- 5 The Board improved the validity of the content and security of examinations by transferring the administration responsibilities for national engineering and surveying examinations to NCEES and converting state examinations to computer-based-testing delivery methods.

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- 6 The Board received legislative authority to fingerprint applicants and obtain criminal history reports with the overall goal of safeguarding the public.

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- 7 The Board continuously identified emerging technologies and established an online presence on multiple social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, to enhance communication with consumers and licensees.

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- 8 The Board amended regulations to remove appeals of national examinations, thus promoting enhanced exam security.

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## Mission

We protect the public's safety and property by promoting standards for competence and integrity through licensing and regulating the Board's professions.

## Vision

A California that leads the nation in protecting the public and environment with competent and ethical professional services by the Board's licensees.

## Values

Integrity  
Consumer protection  
Fairness  
Quality  
Customer service



# Strategic Goal Areas

## **1 LICENSING**

*The Board empowers applicants and licensees with a method for providing services in California to protect consumers.*

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## **2 APPLICATIONS/EXAMINATIONS**

*The Board promotes appropriate standards so that qualified individuals may obtain licensure in order to protect the public.*

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## **3 LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

*The Board ensures that statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures strengthen and support their mandate and mission.*

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## **4 ENFORCEMENT**

*The Board protects the health and safety of consumers through the enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the practices of engineering, land surveying, geology, and geophysics.*

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## **5 OUTREACH**

*The Board promotes the importance of licensing in an effort to regularly and consistently educate consumers, licensees, and stakeholders about the practice and regulation of the professions.*

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## **6 CUSTOMER SERVICE**

*The Board strives to enhance organizational effectiveness and improve the quality of its services.*

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# Goal 1: Licensing

*The Board empowers applicants and licensees with a method for providing services in California to protect consumers.*

- 1.1 Identify the minimum curriculum required for a qualifying geological sciences degree.
- 1.2 Develop fact sheets that describe the legal authority, functions, and benefits for the public for each of the license types regulated by the Board.
- 1.3 Improve the existing credit card process with the implementation of BreEZe<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4 Expand credit card transactions to all license types with the implementation of BreEZe.
- 1.5 Recommend potential methods for enacting continuing education requirements.
- 1.6 Educate university administrators and students about the importance of licensure.

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<sup>1</sup> BreEZe is the new online licensing and enforcement system scheduled to be implemented 2015-16 by Department of Consumer Affairs'.

## Goal 2: Applications/Examinations

*The Board promotes appropriate standards so that qualified individuals may obtain licensure in order to protect the public.*

- 2.1 Work with DCA to increase Board involvement in all aspects of the national exams.
- 2.2 Increase exam opportunities for candidates.
- 2.3 Advocate for national exams to include content that measures competency that meets California's needs.
- 2.4 Evaluate and identify ways to reduce the application process timeframes.
- 2.5 Explore costs and benefits of considering, if appropriate, withdrawing from national exams and developing California exams.
- 2.6 Examine the appropriateness of current education / experience requirements for licensure.

## Goal 3: Laws and Regulations

*The Board ensures that statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures strengthen and support their mandate and mission.*

- 3.1 Establish a legislative and regulatory work group of two Board members and staff and provide a written report at Board meetings.
- 3.2 Determine if changes to legislation or regulations are needed due to emerging technologies and industry practices.
- 3.3 Pro-actively clarify conflicting laws and regulations.
- 3.4 Seek legislation to merge the Geology/Geophysics fund with Engineers/Land Surveyors fund.

## Goal 4: Enforcement

*The Board protects the health and safety of consumers through the enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the practices of engineering, land surveying, geology, and geophysics.*

- 4.1 Leverage collaborative relationships to encourage a reduction in cycle times at the Office of Administrative Hearings, Division of Investigation, and Attorney General's Office.
- 4.2 Analyze and determine reasonable time frames and develop a benchmark/expectation for each step in the investigation.
- 4.3 Reduce complaint investigation cycle times to under 180 calendar days.
- 4.4 Research the feasibility of adding a legal requirement that licensees respond to Board investigative inquiries within a specified period of time.
- 4.5 Reduce formal disciplinary action process to a target of 540 calendar days.
- 4.6 Improve the technical expert consultant selection process, training, and compensation to enhance quality and quantity.

## Goal 5: Outreach

*The Board promotes the importance of licensing in an effort to regularly and consistently educate consumers, licensees, and stakeholders about the practice and regulation of the professions.*

- 5.1 Develop a multi-phase stakeholder outreach plan.
- 5.2 Communicate enforcement actions on an ongoing basis on the website as soon as feasible.
- 5.3 Produce a newsletter on a quarterly basis that includes enforcement actions.
- 5.4 Encourage DCA and Agency to approve speaking and/or participating in conferences and other public and/or licensee outreach events.
- 5.5 Expand the Board's social media presence.
- 5.6 Proactively educate stakeholders to prevent violations.

## Goal 6: Customer Service

*The Board works to develop and maintain an efficient and effective team of professional and public leaders and staff with sufficient resources to improve the Board's provision of programs and services.*

- 6.1 Provide Board-specific training for new Board members in addition to DCA's Board Member Orientation Training.
- 6.2 Enhance customer service by providing training for staff.
- 6.3 Implement a plan to improve internal collaboration.
- 6.4 Issue licenses on environmentally friendly wallet-sized cards in addition to current paper license.
- 6.5 Educate the public about the steps and timing in the enforcement process.

# Strategic Planning Process

To understand the environment in which the Board operates and identify factors that could impact the Board's success, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID unit conducted an environmental scan of the internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- An online survey sent to 5,000 stakeholders, comprised of engineers, land surveyors, geologists, and geophysicists; professional associations; California colleges; and others who expressed interest in the strategic direction of the Board. The online survey received 1,202 responses.
- Telephone interviews with Board members in April 2014.
- Two focus group discussions with Board staff in April 2014.
- A manager focus group in April 2014.
- An interview with the Executive Officer and Assistant Executive Officer in May 2014.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by the Board during a strategic planning session facilitated by SOLID on June 5, 2014. This information guided the Board in the development of its mission, vision, and values, while directing the strategic goals and objectives outlined in this 2015 – 2018 strategic plan.

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*This strategic plan is based on stakeholder information and discussions facilitated by SOLID for BPELSG in April and May 2014. Subsequent amendments may have been made after Board adoption of this plan.*

