

STATE OF WISCONSIN
EXAMINING BOARD OF GEOLOGISTS, HYDROLOGISTS, AND SOIL
SCIENTISTS

IN THE MATTER OF RULEMAKING	:	NOTICE OF TIME PERIOD
PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE BOARD	:	FOR COMMENTS FOR THE
	:	ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN of the time period for public comment on the economic impact of this proposed rule of the GHSS Examining Board, including how this proposed rule may affect businesses, local government units and individuals. The comments will be considered when the Department of Safety and Professional Services prepares the Economic Impact Analysis pursuant to § 227.137. Written comments may be submitted to:

Jake Pelegrin, Administrative Rules Coordinator
Office of Chief Legal Counsel
Department of Safety and Professional Services
PO Box 14497
Madison, WI 53708-0497
DSPSAdminRules@wisconsin.gov

The deadline for submitting economic impact comments is February 27, 2026.

PROPOSED ORDER

A proposed order of the Examining Board of Professional Geologists, Hydrologists, and Soil Scientists to **repeal** GHSS 2.06 (2) and (3), 3.05 (2) and (3), and 4.05 (2) and (3); and to **amend** GHSS 2.06 (1), 3.05 (1), 4.02 (Note), 4.05 (1), and 4.06 (10) (Note) relating to Licensure and Examinations.

Analysis prepared by the Department of Safety and Professional Services.

ANALYSIS

Statutes interpreted:

Section 440.071 (1), Stats.

Statutory authority:

Sections 15.08 (5) (b), 227.11 (2) (a), and 470.03 (1) (a) to (c), Stats.

Explanation of agency authority:

Section 15.08 (5) (b), Stats., provides that each examining board “[s]hall promulgate rules for its own guidance and for the guidance of the trade or profession to which it

pertains, and define and enforce professional conduct and unethical practices not inconsistent with the law relating to the particular trade or profession.”

Section 227.11 (2) (a), Stats., provides that “[e]ach agency may promulgate rules interpreting the provisions of any statute enforced or administered by the agency, if the agency considers it necessary to effectuate the purpose of the statute, but a rule is not valid if the rule exceeds the bounds of correct interpretation.”

Section 470.03 (1) (a) to (c), Stats., state that the examining board shall: (a) “[u]pon the advice of the professional geologist section, promulgate rules establishing requirements and standards for the practice of professional geology by a person who is licensed as a professional geologist under this chapter, including a code of ethics that governs the practice of professional geology.

(b) Upon the advice of the professional hydrologist section, promulgate rules establishing requirements and standards for the practice of professional hydrology by a person who is licensed as a professional hydrologist under this chapter, including a code of ethics that governs the practice of professional hydrology.

(c) Upon the advice of the professional soil scientist section, promulgate rules establishing requirements and standards for the practice of professional soil science by a person who is licensed as a professional soil scientist under this chapter, including a code of ethics that governs the practice of professional soil science.”

Related statute or rule:

Section 440.071 (1), Stats.

Plain language analysis:

The objective of the proposed rule is to update the administrative code of the Examining Board of Professional Geologists, Hydrologists, and Soil Scientists to bring it into compliance with s. 440.071 (1), Stats. This statute prohibits credentialing boards from requiring a person to complete postsecondary education before the person is eligible to take an examination for a credential. Current GHSS code contains experience, education, and examination requirements to apply for licensure as a geologist, hydrologist, or soil scientist. The basics of these requirements are set by statute and are given details and specifics in the GHSS code.

Current GHSS code states various pre-examination requirements that applicants must complete before being allowed to take licensure exams. The proposed rule repeals these pre-examination requirements. In general, the pre-examination requirements being repealed are simply requirements that an applicant has reached a certain point in their education and experience requirements. Overall, applicants must complete all of these education and experience requirements anyway. The rule does not lower the level of qualifications for licensure as a geologist, hydrologist, or soil scientist. It simply changes

the timing, so applicants are able to take licensure exams before their education and experience requirements are substantially completed, if they wish.

Summary of, and comparison with, existing or proposed federal regulation:

None.

Summary of public comments received on statement of scope:

None.

Comparison with rules in adjacent states:

Illinois:

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation is responsible for the licensure and regulation of professional geologists. It does require that to take the geologists' licensing exam, an applicant must complete a bachelor's or graduate degree in a geology educational program [Illinois Administrative Code Title 68 Chapter VII Subchapter b Part 1252 Section 1252.20]. Illinois does not require licensure for professional hydrologists or professional soil scientists.

Iowa:

Iowa does not require licensure of professional geologists, hydrologists, or soil scientists. However, they do require certification as a "certified groundwater professional" for any person who provides subsurface soil contamination and groundwater consulting services, or who contracts to perform or who supervises remediation or corrective action services at leaking underground storage tank sites [567 Iowa Administrative Code 134.1 to 134.5]. There are many different pathways to acquiring this certification, with some that do require post-secondary education before taking an examination, and some that do not.

Michigan:

Michigan does not require licensure of professional geologists, hydrologists, or soil scientists.

Minnesota:

The Minnesota Board of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, Landscape Architects, Geoscientists, and Interior Designers is responsible for the licensure and regulation of geoscientists, among other professions. The Minnesota Board currently recognizes geology and soil science as geoscience disciplines [Minnesota Administrative Rules Part 1800.3900]. The Minnesota Board does require completion of postsecondary education before an applicant is eligible to take a licensing exam [Minnesota Administrative Rules Part 1800.3910 subp. 2. and 3.].

Summary of factual data and analytical methodologies:

The proposed rule was developed by the GHSS Examining Board reviewing 2013 WI Act 114 and determining where changes in the GHSS code are needed to bring compliance.

Analysis and supporting documents used to determine effect on small business or in preparation of economic impact analysis:

The proposed rules will be posted for a period of 14 days to solicit public comment on economic impact, including how the proposed rules may affect businesses, local government units, and individuals.

Fiscal Estimate and Economic Impact Analysis:

The Fiscal Estimate and Economic Impact Analysis will be attached upon completion.

Effect on small business:

These proposed rules will not have an economic impact on small businesses, as defined in s. 227.114 (1), Stats. The Department's Regulatory Review Coordinator may be contacted at Jennifer.Garrett@wisconsin.gov or (608) 266-2112.

Agency contact person:

Jake Pelegrin, Administrative Rules Coordinator, Department of Safety and Professional Services, Office of Chief Legal Counsel, 4822 Madison Yards Way, P.O. Box 14497, Madison, Wisconsin 53708-0497; email at DSPSAdminRules@wisconsin.gov.

Place where comments are to be submitted and deadline for submission:

Comments may be submitted to Jake Pelegrin, Administrative Rules Coordinator, Department of Safety and Professional Services, Office of Chief Legal Counsel, 4822 Madison Yards Way, P.O. Box 14497, Madison, Wisconsin 53708-0497, or by email to DSPSAdminRules@wisconsin.gov. Comments must be received on or before the public hearing to be included in the record of rule-making proceedings.

TEXT OF RULE

SECTION 1. GHSS 2.06 (1) is amended to read:

GHSS 2.06 Examinations. (1) REQUIRED EXAMINATIONS. An applicant for initial licensure as a professional geologist shall pass examinations for the professional practice of geology approved by the professional geologist section. Required examinations shall include a fundamentals examination and a principles and practice of geology examination. The fundamentals examination requires an understanding of the physical and mathematical sciences involved in the fundamentals of geology. The principles and

practice examination requires the ability to apply geologic principles and judgment to problems in the practice of professional geology.

SECTION 2. GHSS 2.06 (2) and (3) are repealed.

SECTION 3. GHSS 3.05 (1) is amended to read:

GHSS 3.05 Examinations. (1) REQUIRED EXAMINATIONS. An applicant for initial licensure as a professional hydrologist shall pass examinations for the professional practice of hydrology approved by the professional hydrologist section. Required examinations shall include a fundamentals examination and a principles and practice examination. The fundamentals examination requires an understanding of the physical and mathematical sciences involved in the fundamentals of hydrology. The principles and practice examination requires the ability to apply hydrologic principles and judgment to problems in the practice of professional hydrology.

SECTION 4. GHSS 3.05 (2) and (3) are repealed.

SECTION 5. GHSS 4.02 (Note) is amended to read:

Note: ~~Applications~~ Instructions for applications are available ~~upon request to the Professional Soil Scientist Section of the board at 1400 East Washington Avenue, P.O. Box 8935, Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8935; phone (608) 266-2112 or available for download from the department webpage:~~ on the department's website at <http://dsps.wi.gov>.

SECTION 6. GHSS 4.05 (1) is amended to read:

GHSS 4.05 Examinations. (1) REQUIRED EXAMINATIONS. All applicants for initial licensure as a professional soil scientist shall pass examinations for the professional practice of soil science approved by the professional soil scientist section. Required examinations shall include a fundamentals examination and a principles and practice examination. The fundamentals examination requires an understanding of the physical and mathematical sciences involved in the fundamentals of soil science. The principles and practice examination requires the ability to apply soil science principles and judgment to problems in the practice of professional soil science.

SECTION 7. GHSS 4.05 (2) and (3) are repealed.

SECTION 8. GHSS 4.06 (10) (Note) is amended to read:

Note: ~~Application forms~~ Instructions for applications are available ~~upon request to the Professional Soil Scientist Section of the board at 1400 East Washington Avenue, P.O. Box 8935, Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8935; phone (608) 266-2112 or available for download from the department webpage:~~ on the department's website at <http://dsps.wi.gov>.

SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE. The rules adopted in this order shall take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register, pursuant to s. 227.22 (2) (intro.), Stats.

(END OF TEXT OF RULE)
