

History of the Texas Section of AIPG

From the early 1990s through 2001, the Texas Section of the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG-TX) was very active in the multiple efforts to craft a bill and to muster professional and legislative support to license the practice of geoscience in the State of Texas. The Texas Section hired a lobbyist to represent the Section before the Legislature and many members personally met with State Senators and Representatives to help make the case for licensure. Initially we had opposition from the engineering, environmental science and geography professions, but after much – at times heated – discussion and negotiation, won general support. The Texas Section worked with the broad geoscience community to focus the legislation on the practice of Geoscience in the public sector and to exclude from licensure those practicing in the private sector, such as the earth resource exploration/extraction (oil and gas, mining) industry or as academic geoscientists. The legislation was focused on geologists, geophysicists and soil scientists practicing in the public sector. The legislation that created licensure was called the Texas Geoscience Practice Act and was passed by the Texas State Legislature in 2001. The legislation became effective on September 1, 2003. The Texas Geoscience Practice Act created the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists (TBPG) which is governed by a nine-member Board, all appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Texas Senate. The Board consists of six Professional Geoscientists and three public members, who serve staggered six-year terms. The Texas Section has provided the Governor’s office with recommendations for appointments to the Board.

The Texas Section maintains a website that is run by several Section members. The Section website has a column called the Wise Report that is periodically updated. The report summarizes and addresses issues of relevance to Texas CPGs and to geoscientists in general. The Wise Report typically contains news of activities in the Texas State Legislature and state regulatory agencies which might impact geoscientists, possibly warranting political action by Texas CPGs.

A group of Texas CPGs has been very active in monitoring Legislative and Texas regulatory agency actions and rulings, as they might potentially affect the practice, and licensure, of geoscience in Texas. They have been present at, and testified before, Legislative Committees and the TBPG, to ensure that the voice and interests of Texas geoscientists are recognized and that the Texas PG program is respected and maintained. These geoscientists have successfully interceded on several occasions to block Legislative and TBPG actions that, if implemented, would have been detrimental, if not fatal, to the proper and effective licensure of geoscience practice in Texas.

For additional information on AIPG-TX and the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists, go to:

AIPG-TX: www.aipg-tx.org

TBPG: www.tbpg.state.tx.us