
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1317

Session of
1983

INTRODUCED BY STEWART, ITKIN, BRANDT, GLADECK, ZWIKL, WOZNIAK,
LEVI, BOYES, GAMBLE, GREENWOOD, COY, CLYMER, CAPPABIANCA,
MICHLOVIC, MURPHY, POTT, NAHILL, PRATT, SAURMAN, E. Z. TAYLOR
AND F. E. TAYLOR, JUNE 29, 1983

AS AMENDED ON THIRD CONSIDERATION, IN SENATE, NOVEMBER 27, 1984

AN ACT

1 Providing for the certification of professional geologists; AND <—
2 APPROPRIATING FUNDS COLLECTED.

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4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Geologists
8 Certification Act.

9 Section 2. Legislative findings.

10 The General Assembly finds that in order to safeguard life,
11 health, property and environment and to promote the public
12 welfare, the practice of geology in this Commonwealth is hereby
13 declared to be subject to regulation in the public interest. Two
14 years after this act goes into effect, it shall be unlawful for
15 any person to practice or offer to practice geology for others
16 within this Commonwealth, unless such person has been duly
17 certified or exempted from certification under the provisions of
18 this act.

19 Section 3. Definitions.

20 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
21 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
22 context clearly indicates otherwise:

23 "Certificate." A certificate or other documentary evidence
24 that a geologist has been certified to engage in the practice of
25 geology.

26 "Certification or certifying." The act by the department of
27 certifying the qualifications of a professional geologist to
28 engage in the practice of geology.

29 "Certified professional geologist." A person who, by reason
30 of knowledge of the principles of earth science acquired by

1 education and practical experience, is qualified to engage in
2 the practice of geology as hereinafter defined and who has been
3 certified by the department pursuant to the provisions of this
4 act, and whose certification is in force and has not been
5 suspended or revoked.

6 "Department." The Department of Environmental Resources.

7 "Display." Written reports, plans, maps, cross sections,
8 diagrams or any other presentations used to communicate the
9 results, conclusions and recommendations of the practice of
10 geology.

11 "Geology." The science which treats of the earth in general;
12 the earth's processes; investigation of the earth and the rocks
13 and other materials which compose it; and the science of
14 utilizing knowledge of the earth's processes, constituent rocks,
15 minerals, liquids, gases and other materials for the use of
16 mankind.

17 "Practice of geology." The practice or the offer to practice
18 geology for others, such practice including, but not limited to,
19 describing the natural processes acting on earth materials,
20 gases or fluids, predicting the probable occurrence of natural
21 resources, predicting and locating natural or man-induced
22 phenomena which may be useful or hazardous to mankind,
23 recognizing, determining and evaluating geologic factors;
24 further, such practice shall include, but not be limited to,
25 geological consulting, investigating, evaluation, inspecting,
26 geological mapping, planning and giving testimony before
27 governmental agencies on or pertaining to geological matters.
28 The practice of geology shall not be deemed to include the
29 drilling of wells for water supply, the conduct of sewage
30 enforcement officers or determinations made pursuant to the

1 requirements of the act of January 24, 1966 (1965 P.L.1535,
2 No.537), known as the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act, the
3 practice of architecture or engineering or land surveying as
4 such, for which separate licensure or certification is required
5 under the provisions of the act of July 12, 1919 (P.L.933,
6 No.369), referred to as the Architects Registration Law, or the
7 act of May 23, 1945 (P.L.913, No.367), known as the Professional
8 Engineers Registration Law.

9 "Responsible charge." A position that requires initiative,
10 skill and independent judgment and implies such degree of
11 competence and accountability gained by technical education and
12 experience of a grade and character as is sufficient to qualify
13 an individual to personally and independently engage in, and be
14 entrusted with, the work involved in the practice of geology.
15 This term does not include positions which require routine
16 performance of subprofessional work such as auxiliary personnel,
17 unless acting as chief of party.

18 "Secretary." The Secretary of Environmental Resources.
19 Section 4. Construction of act.

20 (a) Practice by firms, etc.--A firm, corporation, co-
21 partnership, association or joint-stock company may engage in
22 the practice of geology in this Commonwealth, provided only that
23 such practice is carried on by or under the responsible charge
24 of at least one certified professional geologist or persons
25 exempted under section 5(7) whose name and seal or stamp appears
26 on all displays introduced into the stream of commerce.

27 (b) Educational activities.--This act shall not be construed
28 to affect or prevent the presentation of field excursions,
29 educational courses or other educational endeavors or the
30 pursuit of scientific studies for the advancement of the

1 sciences.

2 Section 5. Exemptions.

3 The following shall be exempted from registration under the
4 provisions of this act:

5 (1) The practice of geology by a person not a resident
6 of and having no established place of business in this
7 Commonwealth, when such practice does not exceed an aggregate
8 of 30 days in any calendar year and provided the person is
9 duly certified to practice geology in a state or other
10 jurisdiction in which the requirements for the certification
11 of geologists are of a standard satisfactory to the
12 department or provided the person presents evidence
13 satisfactory to the department that the person is a qualified
14 geologist; and provided further that the nonresident shall
15 file with the department, before or within five days of the
16 beginning of the aggregate of a 30-day practice of geology in
17 this Commonwealth, a statement giving name, residence, the
18 number of his certificate or equivalent and by what authority
19 issued or other evidence of qualification and the place and
20 nature of the work in which that person will be engaged in
21 this Commonwealth; and upon the completion of the work, a
22 statement of the time engaged in such work within this
23 Commonwealth. To such a person, the department shall issue a
24 temporary authorization to practice for not more than an
25 aggregate of 30 days upon proper application therefor and the
26 payment of a fee established by the department.

27 (2) The practice of geology by a person not a resident
28 of and having no established place of business in this
29 Commonwealth, or who has recently become a resident thereof,
30 practicing or offering to practice geology in this

1 Commonwealth for more than an aggregate of 30 days, if that
2 person shall have filed with the department a proper
3 application for certification accompanied by the prescribed
4 fee, provided the person is duly certified to practice
5 geology in a state or other jurisdiction in which the
6 requirements for the certification of geologists are of a
7 standard satisfactory to the department or provided the
8 person presents evidence satisfactory to the department that
9 the person is a qualified geologist. The department shall be
10 required to consider the application within 90 days from the
11 date of filing of the application. Until such time as the
12 department considers the application, the person practicing
13 geology shall be exempt from registration under this act.

14 (3) The practice of employees solely for their employer,
15 or any employee of a person practicing lawfully under the
16 provisions of this act.

17 (4) Persons who practice geology solely for their own
18 use, and provided such practice is not directly related to
19 the public interest.

20 (5) Persons engaged solely in teaching the science of
21 geology.

22 (6) Officers and employees of the Federal Government AND <—
23 OF THE COMMONWEALTH while engaged in this Commonwealth in the
24 practice of geology for the ~~Federal Government~~. STATE AND <—
25 FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS.

26 (7) The practice of soil science, soil mechanics,
27 foundation engineering and geological engineering by
28 professional engineers who are duly licensed under the law in
29 this Commonwealth.

30 Section 6. Application.

1 (a) Fee.--Each application for original certification shall
2 be accompanied by an application fee of \$10 in the form of a
3 check or money order made payable to the Department of
4 Environmental Resources.

5 (b) Contents.--An applicant for certification shall fill out
6 and file with the department the original of an application
7 form, available upon request from the department, no later than
8 60 days before the applicant plans to be certified. The form
9 shall require relevant information about the applicant's
10 character, geologic knowledge and experience in application of
11 that knowledge. Among the data required on the application form
12 is information about the applicant's:

13 (1) Educational background at the undergraduate and
14 graduate level.

15 (2) Professional geological work, not to include work
16 involving routine sampling, laboratory work or geological
17 drafting. Persons who have taught geological science at
18 college level must provide information about the level of the
19 courses and number of hours per semester taught.

20 (3) Scientific and technical society affiliations and
21 the grade of membership and whether certified by each.

22 (4) Major publications, patents, reports and honors.

23 (5) Adherence to high professional and ethical standards
24 as attested by three references.

25 Section 7. Qualifications.

26 Determination of satisfactory qualifications shall be based
27 on the applicant's character, knowledge of the principles and
28 techniques of geology and experience in the application of those
29 principles and techniques. The following shall be the minimum
30 qualifications for certification:

1 ~~(1) The applicant must be certified by the American~~ <—
2 ~~Institute of Professional Geologists. A person who is in good~~
3 ~~standing as a member of the American Institute of~~
4 ~~Professional Geologists and who has been certified by that~~
5 ~~organization, is deemed to be eligible upon application and~~
6 ~~payment of applicable fees to become certified under the act;~~
7 ~~or~~

8 (2) (1) The applicant must be of good moral character
9 and meet the following combination of education and
10 experience:

11 (i) Education:

12 (A) graduation from an accredited institution of
13 higher learning, with a major in geology, geophysics,
14 geochemistry or engineering geology with a minimum of
15 30 semester or 45 quarter hours in geology,
16 geophysics, geochemistry, engineering geology or
17 their subdivisions; or

18 (B) completion of 30 semester or 45 quarter
19 hours in geological science courses leading to a
20 major in geology, of which at least 24 semester or 36
21 quarter hours are in third or fourth year or graduate
22 courses; and

23 (ii) Experience: Completion of at least seven years
24 of professional geological work which shall include
25 either a minimum of three years of professional
26 geological work under the supervision of a certified
27 professional geologist, except that prior to July 1,
28 1985, professional geological work qualifies under this
29 subparagraph if it is under the supervision of a
30 qualified geologist, or a minimum of five years

experience in a responsible position in geological work.

(iii) The following criteria of education and experience qualify as specified toward accumulation of the required number of years of professional geological work:

(A) Each year of undergraduate study in the geological sciences shall count as one-half year of professional geological work up to a maximum of two years and each year of graduate study or research shall count as a year of professional geological work.

(B) Teaching in the geological sciences at college level counts, as one year of professional geological work, provided that the total teaching experience includes six semester hours per semester for at least two semesters or equivalent if under another system of third or fourth year or graduate courses.

(C) Credit for undergraduate study AND graduate study ~~and teaching~~, separately or in combination, may not exceed a total of four years toward meeting the required number of years of professional geological work. <—

(D) When any combination of teaching and professional geological work by a faculty member is applied to any one-year period, each activity must be prorated so that the total credit toward meeting the requirements for professional geological work will not exceed 12 months.

~~(3)~~ (2) If in the opinion of the department inadequate <—

1 information has been provided by the applicant to allow the
2 department to ascertain whether the applicant satisfied the
3 qualifications for certification, the applicant may be
4 required to provide additional information for purposes of
5 the application or may be required to present himself or
6 herself for an interview at the department for this purpose.

7 Section 8. Certification.

8 (a) Issuance of certificate.--An applicant who meets the
9 qualifications for certification under this act, upon payment of
10 a certification fee of ~~\$75~~ in the form of a check or money order <—
11 made payable to the department IN AN AMOUNT ESTABLISHED BY THE <—
12 DEPARTMENT TO CARRY OUT ITS RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE
13 PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT, shall be issued a numbered certificate
14 as a professional geologist. A certification number, once
15 assigned, shall not be used again for any person other than the
16 one to whom it is originally issued.

17 (b) Eligibility.--Certification may only be granted to an
18 individual who:

19 (1) pays the fee specified in this act; and

20 (2) demonstrates to the satisfaction of the department
21 that the individual has the qualifications required by this
22 act.

23 (c) Denial.--An applicant who is denied certification shall
24 be notified in writing and informed of the reason for the
25 denial. Within 30 days after the receipt of notice, the
26 applicant may make written request to the department for a
27 hearing.

28 (d) Convictions.--A plea or verdict of guilty or a
29 conviction following a plea of nolo contendere made to a charge
30 of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude is deemed to be

1 a conviction within the meaning of this act. The department may
2 order a certificate suspended or revoked or may decline to issue
3 a certificate when the time for an appeal has elapsed, when the
4 judgment of conviction has been affirmed on appeal or when an
5 order granting probation is made suspending the imposition of
6 sentence.

7 (e) Seals and stamps.--Each individual certified hereunder
8 may, upon certification, obtain and use a seal or stamp of
9 certification, of a design authorized by the department, bearing
10 the certified individual's name and number, the legend
11 "Certified Professional Geologist," and the date of expiration
12 of the current certificate.

13 (f) Renewal of certification.--Every geologist certified
14 under this act who desires to continue the practice of geology
15 shall every two years pay to the department a renewal fee, to be
16 established by the department. The fee shall be paid on or
17 before a date to be fixed by the department, upon receipt of
18 which a renewal certificate for the current period shall be
19 issued.

20 (g) Failure to renew.--Failure of a certified individual to
21 renew a certificate by the date of its expiration shall not
22 automatically deprive such person of the right of renewal;
23 except that application for renewal of an expired certificate
24 shall be made on a form and be accompanied by payment of such a
25 delayed renewal fee, as the department may prescribe. A
26 certificate which is not renewed within two years after its
27 expiration date shall not be renewed thereafter. The holder of
28 such an expired certificate may reapply for certification under
29 any appropriate subsection of section 6.

30 (h) Replacement certificates.--Replacements for certificates

1 lost, destroyed or mutilated shall be issued subject to the
2 rules of the department. A replacement fee, to be established by
3 the department, shall be paid for such issuance.

4 Section 9. Violations.

5 (a) Unlawful practices.--From and after two years after this
6 act goes into effect, it shall be unlawful for any person to
7 practice, or offer to practice geology as defined in this act or
8 to use in connection with the person's name or otherwise assume
9 or advertise any title or description tending to convey the
10 impression that the person is a certified professional
11 geologist, unless the person has been duly certified or exempted
12 under the provisions of this act. The right to engage in the
13 practice of geology shall be deemed a personal right, based on
14 the qualifications of the individual as evidenced by his
15 certificate, which shall not be transferable.

16 (b) Geologist displays.--From and after two years after this
17 act goes into effect, all geological displays shall be prepared
18 by a certified professional geologist or by a person under the
19 responsible charge of a certified professional geologist and all
20 geological displays shall be signed, stamped or impressed with
21 the seal of the certified professional geologist which shall
22 indicate responsibility for them, except that persons practicing
23 under the provisions of section 5 are exempted.

24 (c) Use of expired stamp, etc.--It shall be unlawful for a
25 person to affix that person's signature, stamp or to impress
26 that person's seal of registration to any display after the
27 certificate of the individual certified named thereon has
28 expired or been suspended or revoked.

29 (d) False use of stamp, etc.--It shall be unlawful for any
30 person to present or attempt to use as his own, the certificate,

1 stamp or seal of certification of a certified individual or to
2 falsely impersonate any certified individual of like or
3 different name.

4 (e) Penalty.--Any person convicted of violating any of the
5 provisions of this section shall be guilty of a summary offense
6 and upon conviction thereof be sentenced to pay a fine not
7 exceeding \$300 or to imprisonment not exceeding 90 days, or
8 both. Any person convicted of violating provisions of this
9 section for the second time shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of
10 the second degree and upon conviction thereof shall be sentenced
11 to pay a fine of \$500 or to imprisonment not exceeding two
12 years, or both.

13 Section 10. Roster.

14 (a) ~~Publishing~~ MAINTENANCE of roster.--As soon as <—
15 practicable after the completion of the biennial renewals in
16 each even-numbered year, the department shall ~~publish~~ MAINTAIN <—
17 AND MAKE AVAILABLE a roster showing the names and addresses of
18 certified professional geologists who are valid registrants in
19 this Commonwealth until the date shown in the roster.

20 (b) Individual responsibility.--It shall be the
21 responsibility of each registrant to keep the department advised
22 of the latest address of the registrant.

23 Section 11. Penalties.

24 (a) Suspension, etc.--The department shall have the power
25 and authority to suspend, refuse to renew or to revoke the
26 certificate of any person who is found guilty in a court of law
27 of:

28 (1) The practice of fraud or deceit in obtaining a
29 certificate.

30 (2) Any felony.

1 (3) Committing deceit, willful misrepresentation,
2 violation of contract, fraud, gross negligence or any other
3 misconduct in the practice of geology.

4 (4) Aiding or abetting any person in the violation of
5 any provision of this act.

6 (5) Violating any provision of this act.

7 The department may confiscate the certificate and any stamp or
8 seal evidencing the certification of any person who is found
9 guilty.

10 (b) Right of complaint.--Any person may prefer, against any
11 certified individual, charges of fraud, deceit, gross negligence
12 or misconduct. The charges shall be in writing, and shall be
13 sworn to by the person making them and shall be filed with the
14 department. All charges, unless dismissed by the department as
15 unfounded or trivial OR UNLESS AMICABLY RESOLVED BY THE PARTIES, <—
16 shall be heard by a hearing examiner. Copies of any documents
17 filed in cases resulting in dismissal by the department shall be
18 sent to the secretary and kept on file for a period of six
19 years.

20 (c) Hearing examiners.--The department shall appoint such
21 hearing examiners as shall be necessary to conduct hearings as
22 may be required under this subsection. The department shall have
23 the power to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations setting
24 forth the functions, powers, standards and duties to be followed
25 by the hearing examiners. The hearing examiners shall have the
26 power to conduct hearings in accordance with the regulations of
27 the department and to issue subpoenas requiring the attendance
28 and testimony of individuals or the production of pertinent
29 books, records, documents and papers by persons whom they
30 believe to have information relevant to any matter pending

1 before the examiner. The examiner shall also have the power to
2 administer oaths. The hearing examiner shall hear evidence
3 submitted and arguments of counsel, if any, with reasonable
4 dispatch, and shall promptly record his decision, supported by
5 findings of fact, and a copy thereof shall immediately be sent
6 to the secretary and to counsel of record, or the parties, if
7 not represented.

8 (d) Right of appeal.--Any certified individual aggrieved or
9 adversely affected by any final order of the department in an
10 individual proceeding may appeal in the manner provided by law
11 and general rule for the taking of appeals from the decisions of
12 administrative agencies.

13 (e) Reissuance of certificates after appeals.--Application
14 for the reissuance of a certificate after findings on appeals
15 may be made in such a manner as shall be directed by the
16 secretary.

17 SECTION 12. DISPOSITION OF FUNDS. <—

18 ALL MONEYS FROM TIME TO TIME PAID BY FEES COLLECTED UNDER THE
19 PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT SHALL BE DEPOSITED IN THE GENERAL FUND
20 AND SHALL BE CREDITED AS AN AUGMENTATION TO THE APPROPRIATE
21 DEPARTMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADMINISTRATION OF
22 THIS ACT. THE EXPENDITURE OF THESE FUNDS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION
23 AND ENFORCEMENT OF THIS ACT IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED AND, FOR THESE
24 PURPOSES, SUCH FUNDS ARE HEREBY APPROPRIATED.

25 SECTION 13. RULES AND REGULATIONS.

26 THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROMULGATE SUCH RULES AND REGULATIONS AS
27 IT DEEMS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT.

28 Section ~~12~~ 14. General repeal. <—

29 All acts and parts of acts are repealed insofar as they are
30 inconsistent with this act.

1 Section ~~13~~ 15. Expiration. <—
2 This act expires in seven years unless extended by ~~statute.~~ <—
3 PURSUANT TO THE ACT OF DECEMBER 22, 1981 (P.L.508, NO.142), <—
4 KNOWN AS THE SUNSET ACT.
5 Section ~~14~~ 16. Effective date. <—
6 This act shall take effect ~~immediately.~~ JULY 1, 1985. <—