



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection State Well Drillers and Pump Installers Examining and Advisory Board Meeting Minutes for March 20, 2025

Approved by the Board on April 17, 2025

Board Members Participating Via Telephone/Microsoft Teams: Art Becker (Chairman), Gary Poppe (Vice-Chairman), Gordon Craig, Dave Lyman, Michael Klaser, Steve Domber, Richard Dalton, and Alexandra Carone

Board Members Absent: Joe Yost

Board Legal Representative Present: Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Jill Denyes, NJ Division of Law

NJDEP Water Supply (Bureau of Water Allocation and Well Permitting) Staff Present: Kat Burkhard, Steve Reya, Mark Miller, Steve Vargo, Michael Schumacher, and Jillian Walker

Other NJDEP Staff Present: Don Hirsch, Northern Water Compliance and Enforcement

Members of the Public: Brian McGuire, MB Drilling LLC; Eric Hoffman, Peak Environmental

1. Call to Order, Introductions, and Welcoming of Newly Appointed Board Members-

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 am with a quorum present via Microsoft Teams and telephone. Notice of the meeting and instructions on how to participate by video or phone were listed on the Board's website.

S. Reya began the meeting by introducing newly appointed Board members, Alexandra Carone and Michael Klaser. A. Carone is a staff member with the NJDEP Geological Mapping and Coastal Geology Section. She has been sitting in on Board meetings for the past year or so and is filling the role of the third representative of the Department. M. Klaser, who currently works at Peak Environmental, has been appointed to replace E. Hoffman who vacated his position on the Board. S. Reya thanked M. Klaser for his patience and willingness to serve after a long appointment process.

On behalf of the Board, A. Becker thanked the new appointees joining the Board, and thanked E. Hoffman for his service on the Board over the last 4 years. A. Becker wished E. Hoffman success for the future and stated he is welcome to join any future Board meetings. A. Becker also mentioned the Board is looking forward to hearing more about E. Hoffman's horizontal directional drilling (HDD)

project in the future, previously mentioned in the February 20, 2025 Board meeting. E. Hoffman said it has been an honor serving on the Board, and provided an update on the HDD project, stating the project will start in mid-April and he will be documenting it and putting together a presentation for the Board. E. Hoffman also stated he plans to continue attending future meetings.

2. Review and Certification of February 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes-

A. Becker asked if anyone had any comments on the draft minutes from the February 20, 2025, Board meeting, and no comments were made.

A motion to approve the draft minutes from February 20, 2025 was made by G. Craig, seconded by S. Domber. All were in favor except for G. Poppe, who abstained due to being absent for the February meeting.

3. Review of License Applicants-

A. Becker summarized the list of license applications provided by the Department. He stated that one pump installer license application, which was approved by the Department, was on the list. He asked if anyone had any comments on the license application. No comments were made.

A motion to approve the license applicant was made by G. Poppe, seconded by A. Carone, and approved unanimously.

Below is the license applicant approved for licensure:

License Type	Applicant Name	Employer
Pump Installer	Cody Black	Stover's Wells and Pumps Inc.

4. Review of Continuing Education Courses-

Maryland-Delaware Water Well Association (MDWWA)

S. Reya opened the discussion, summarizing the MDWWA 2025 Annual Convention took place February 6 and February 7, 2025. One of the courses presented, Current OSHA Trends and Most Often Cited Issues, was not approved by the Board during initial review of the convention application as details of the course were not provided. The Board requested more information on the course, which was received in the form of a course synopsis and PowerPoint presentation. A. Becker noted the course title does not quite match the content presented in the course. S. Reya agreed with this and noted that the course description was listed differently in multiple portions of the application and provided documents, which created some confusion regarding the actual name of the course being offered. A. Becker asked if anyone else had any comments on the course application. None were made.

A motion to approve Current OSHA Trends and Most Often Cited Issues for one CEP was made by G. Poppe and seconded by G. Craig. All were in favor except for A. Carone, who abstained.

PMA Companies

S. Reya provided a summary of the convention application for 14 courses previously considered in the February 20, 2025 meeting. The Board had discussed approving most of the courses listed in the application but requested more information from the course provider. Department staff reached out to

PMA Companies, who responded that they did not mean to submit the application for well driller and pump installer continuing education credit, and they were not interested in pursuing course application approval. Therefore, no action was needed from the Board for this application.

New Jersey Ground Water Association (NJGWA)

An application for continuing education credit for NJGWA's April 2025 Membership Meeting was reviewed by the Board. The application was for 2 CEPs and highlighted a presentation to be given at the meeting titled "Soil Classification for the Drilling Industry." A. Becker asked if anyone had any comments on the course application. None were made.

A motion to approve NJGWA's April 2025 Membership Meeting for two CEPs was made by G. Poppe, seconded by G. Craig, and approved unanimously.

Tri-State Drilling Contractors Association

This application was submitted for six CEPs for the 2025 Annual Tri-State Drilling Contractors Association Training Day. A. Becker asked S. Reya if he had any comments on the course application, and S. Reya answered that he did not, and the application was straightforward. A. Becker asked if anyone had any comments on the course application. None were made.

A motion to approve 2025 Annual Tri-State Drilling Contractors Association Training Day for six CEPs was made by G. Poppe, seconded by S. Domber, and approved unanimously.

Rutgers University

A. Becker introduced the course Rutgers University submitted an application for, The Science and Practical Aspects of In-situ Technologies, for 6 CEPs. The course will take place over one day covering 6 topics with multiple presenters.

R. Dalton voiced concern over the course topics not being related to well drilling and instead being more relevant to Licensed Site Remediation Professionals (LSRP). Additionally, he pointed out there are no descriptions provided on the application for each of the six topics. A. Becker agreed but contested the relevancy of the course to well drillers, stating someone involved in drilling environmental wells may be interested. R. Dalton cited N.J.A.C. 7:9D's provision regarding the course topic requirements for well driller and pump installer course approval. A. Becker agreed this course may be of interest to only a few licensees, but it is still worth consideration. M. Klaser added he has witnessed well drillers involved in injecting chemicals into the ground and this course would be beneficial to those licensees as a background in understanding the science behind the remediation system would be helpful. D. Lyman agreed the well drillers should be able to broaden their knowledge in the subject if they choose and G. Poppe agreed the course could be beneficial.

A motion to approve The Science and Practical Aspects of In-situ Technologies for six CEPs was made by M. Klaser and seconded D. Lyman. This motion was approved by all except R. Dalton who opposed. The motion passed.

5. **Bureau of Water Allocation and Well Permitting (Bureau) Enforcement & Field Work Update-**
S. Vargo started with a referrals update, stating two had been sent to Northern Water Compliance and Enforcement. One of the referrals was for an ongoing enforcement case regarding a driller who constructed nine wells without a valid drilling license after their license lapsed during the 2023 license renewal. The second referral was for a condo association, which failed to respond to or act on a directive to seal their inactive well.

Three site visits were conducted by Bureau staff since the last enforcement update, the first of which was to a site in Morris County where a domestic replacement well was being drilled alongside another driller operating a Geoprobe direct push rig on site to collect soil samples. Both drilling activities were in response to groundwater contamination being found in the original domestic well on-site. Department staff from the Immediate Environmental Concern Unit were also present on site. Two site visits were conducted in March: one in Monmouth County and one in Cape May County. The site visit in Monmouth County was in response to a three-day notice condition on the well permit and the well was constructed with no issues. The visit in Cape May was also in response to a three-day notice condition on a well permit due to the well requiring saltwater resistant cement-based grout and a double casing construction due to risk of saltwater intrusion, which went well overall.

20 Notices of Non-Compliance (NONC) were issued for various reasons including failure to notify the Department three business days prior to the start of drilling per specific permit requirements, using un-approved grout in areas of saltwater intrusion and in consolidated formations for monitoring wells and geothermal wells, improper monitoring well construction including failure to case 10 feet into rock and using more than the allowable quantity of gravel pack, drilling without a valid well permit, sealing a well without approval, and using bentonite chips deeper than 50 feet during well installation. D. Lyman inquired about details on the geothermal grout mix being used without a deviation as mentioned in the list of NONCs recently issued. S. Vargo provided details on the materials used in the grout mixture and reiterated it is not an approved grout mix to be used in competent rock and a deviation should be requested for evaluation by the Department prior to permit approval to use this grout mix.

M. Miller continued the enforcement update by discussing Licensed Site Remediation Professionals (LSRPs) recently trying to avoid sealing abandoned wells by claiming they are lost. Bureau staff member, Jeremy Wick, recently went out to a site where this was happening to try locating the well alongside the LSRP and a licensed well driller, and the well was located and sealed shortly after arrival. The Department is pushing back on these claims and is working to improve the current lost/destroyed well guidance.

More notices for expired well permits for which no well record has been submitted have been sent to well drilling companies in a continued attempt to get missing well records submitted. M. Miller also shared a success story with this initiative, about a drilling company which owed the Department more than 500 well records having recently finished submitting their missing records.

The Bureau has seen an increase in the amount of wells being drilled without permits due to well drillers not realizing their permit applications were sent back technically deficient and have not been approved. Additionally, the Bureau is meeting with Enforcement to work on getting more referrals pushed through. A. Becker said he appreciates this work and agrees there is a lack of concern amongst property owners and LSRPs regarding sealing wells.

6. Program Updates-

S. Domber opened the program update by discussing upcoming staffing developments. The Water Allocation section will soon have two new hires, and a lateral transfer starting in March. Promotions are also being worked on for staff in both Water Allocation and Well Permitting but it is slow progress. S. Domber continued with a drought update, noting New Jersey is still in a drought warning, recommending voluntary water use conservation, and the Department is working alongside water utilities. The precipitation has been better than it was in the fall but is still not where it should be for this time of year. The Department will re-evaluate the drought status in April and May and likely advise on a reduction in outdoor water use.

S. Reya provided an update on the phasing out of Type 1 Cement. Drilling companies in Sussex County report suppliers have only been providing Type 1L Cement for some time. The Department's study on Type 1L has been completed, and permeability and mixing tests have been done to see if adjustments will be needed to the mixing ratio listed in N.J.A.C. 7:9D. The New Jersey Institute of Technology will be observing Type 1L being used and collected samples to test in a lab. D. Lyman offered to help with testing the new cement mix. S. Reya asked if anyone on the Board has been getting Type 1L from their suppliers. After Board members responded they did not have Type 1L, S. Reya suggested potentially setting up a test with one of the drillers in Sussex County. G. Craig and A. Becker said they will check to see if their companies have any Type 1L cement to use for testing purposes. After the study is completed, guidance will be given to well drillers on using the new cement.

The Health Department Booklet has been approved up to the Assistant Commissioner's office and will be ready to send to townships and health officials once approval is received from this office. A. Becker shared his appreciation for the work done on the booklet.

7. New Business/Public Comments-

R. Dalton commented that the Board has always requested synopses or course outlines be provided before course approval for CEPs, but the Board just approved the Rutgers University course, The Science and Practical Aspects of In-situ Technologies, without this information. R. Dalton requested the Board's legal counsel, J. Denyes, investigate whether this sets a precedence for approving courses in the future without the required application information. A. Becker mentioned the Board can always rescind or change its decision on course approval. J. Denyes, DAG, stated that she would look into this matter and report back.

8. Adjournment-

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 17, 2025.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 am was made by G. Craig, seconded by S. Domber, and approved unanimously.