



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 December 19, 2024

Approved by the Board on January 16, 2025

Board Members Participating Via Telephone/Microsoft Teams: Art Becker (Chairman), Gary Poppe (Vice-Chairman), Gordon Craig, Dave Lyman, Eric Hoffmann, and Steve Domber

Board Members Absent: Joe Yost and Richard Dalton

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, Mark Ortega, Steve Vargo, and Jillian Walker

Other NJDEP Staff Present: Don Hirsch, Northern Water Compliance and Enforcement; Alexandra Carone, Geological Mapping and Coastal Geology Section

Members of the Public: Brian McGuire, MB Drilling LLC

1. Call to Order and Introductions-

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 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. A. Becker wished everyone happy and safe holidays and thanked them for attending.

2. Review and Certification of November 21, 2024, Meeting Minutes-

A. Becker asked if anyone had any comments on the draft minutes from the November 21, 2024, Board meeting. A. Becker pointed out a necessary spelling correction under item 6 in the third paragraph. No further comments were made.

A motion to approve the draft minutes from November 21, 2024, with the necessary spelling correction in Item 6, was made by S. Domber, seconded by G. Poppe, and approved unanimously.

3. Review of License Applicants-

A. Becker summarized the list of license applicants which were approved by the Department. There was one Journeyman well driller applicant, one Environmental Resource and Geotechnical (ERG) well driller license applicant, and one Pump Installer license applicant. A. Becker noted that there was an additional application submitted to the Department which was marked as incomplete. A. Becker asked if anyone had any comments on the list of license applicants. No comments were made.

A motion to approve the license applicants was made by G. Craig, Seconded by D. Lyman, and approved unanimously.

Below is a list of license applicants approved for licensure:

License Type	Applicant Name	Employer
Journeyman	Garett D. Stiers	MB Drilling, LLC
ERG	Steven T. Comis	MB Drilling, LLC
Pump Installer	Kevin F. Ryan	Wm. M. Ryan & Co., Inc.

4. Continuing Education Course Review/Classification-

S. Reya reintroduced the topic of course review and classification for business-type continuing education courses, which was tabled during the November 21st meeting. It was also noted that prior to the meeting, he provided the Board with a summary document relevant Board motions from September 2018 and October 2018 dictating continuing education course approval and license renewal eligibility requirements. Relevant rule language was presented from N.J.A.C. 7:9D-1.9(g)3, listing criteria for which the Department will not approve a course. Rule language from N.J.A.C. 7:9D-1.10(j) was presented as well, noting this rule leaves discretion to the Board to approve or deny business-type courses as industry courses.

The Board suggested adding a third category for business-type courses. S. Reya explained that the Department does not see the merit in adding an additional category. Adding a third category will make continuing education point (CEP) tracking more difficult for the Department and will make it more difficult for licensees to renew. S. Reya cited a discussion with representatives of the Board of Licensed Site Remediation Professionals, in which they discouraged the Board from creating a category that did not have a lot of course offerings as it proved difficult for licensees to meet renewal requirements in their program.

A. Becker agreed the way the rule is written leaves discretion up to the Board to approve business-type courses. He noted that the referenced rule language states that the Board must review continuing education courses that cover “subject matter related to the industry.” Both he and DAG, Jill Denyes discussed how this affords the Board discretion to determine what courses they believe to be relevant and industry-related. G. Poppe agreed business courses are relevant, and the Board should have the ability to approve or deny these courses. E. Hoffman expressed concern with the potential for drillers and pump installers to take all business-type courses during license renewal and not take enough technical courses.

S. Domber mentioned bringing a presenter to a future Board meeting to speak on the topic of recruiting younger people to the well industry, which the business-type courses are often about. The Board expressed positivity toward this idea.

5. Drought Status and Outreach Update-

M. Miller provided the Board with an update of the current drought status and presented 30-day trend data after recent rainfall. New Jersey is still in a drought warning with no foreseeable change, despite surrounding states having moved out of a drought warning status.

M. Ortega summarized the results of a survey recently sent to well drillers and pump installers to gauge if the drought has resulted in an increase in calls to service well pumps and replace water supply wells. Per survey responses, there has not been a major increase in service calls, which echoes what the Board had reported in the November 21st meeting.

6. Adjournment-

S. Reya thanked the Board for their participation on the Board and for being so helpful in providing their expertise throughout the year. M. Miller reminded the Board that the Department will begin the rule writing process in January 2025. A. Becker mentioned that Mr. Dermot Dillon was recently elected to the National Ground Water Association's Board of Directors and offered congratulations to him.

A. Becker thanked everyone for their participation this year. The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 16, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am.