



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

SHAWN M. LaTOURETTE  
*Commissioner*

TAHESHA WAY, Esq.  
*Lt. Governor*

DIVISION OF WATER SUPPLY AND GEOSCIENCE  
NEW JERSEY GEOLOGICAL AND WATER SURVEY ELEMENT  
BUREAU OF WATER ALLOCATION AND WELL PERMITTING  
401 E. STATE STREET – P.O. BOX 420  
MAIL CODE 401-04Q  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0420  
TELEPHONE: (609) 984-6831  
FAX: (609) 633-1231  
[www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply](http://www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply)

### **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection State Well Drillers and Pump Installers Examining and Advisory Board Meeting Minutes for May 16, 2024**

*Approved by the Board on June 20, 2024*

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

**Board Members Absent:** 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:** Kathleen Burkhard, Mark Miller, Steve Reya, Mark Ortega, and Steve Vargo

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

**Members of the Public:** Joel Bernstein, Summit Drilling

#### **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 thanked everyone for attending.

#### **2. Review and Certification of the April 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes-**

A. Becker asked if anyone had any comments on the draft minutes from the April 18, 2024, Board meeting. A. Becker asked M. Ortega and J. Denyes if there was any resolution on the topic regarding the two individuals with inactive licenses and whether they would need to meet the continuing education requirements if they were to become licensed again. They informed him that there was no current update on that topic yet. There were no comments on the draft minutes.

**A motion to approve the draft minutes from April 18, 2024, as prepared, was made by J. Yost, seconded by G. Poppe, and approved by all except for S. Domber, who was not present for that meeting.**

**3. Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair**

A. Becker stated that the Board must select the Chair and Vice-Chair every May per the bylaws. He offered to step down as Chairman if someone else wanted to fill the role. The Board members nominated A. Becker for Chairman and G. Poppe for Vice-Chairman.

**A motion to have G. Poppe serve as the Board Vice-Chairman was made by G. Craig, seconded by D. Lyman, and approved unanimously.**

**A motion to have A. Becker serve as the Board Chairman was made by J. Yost, seconded by G. Craig, and approved unanimously.**

J. Yost praised A. Becker and G. Poppe and thanked them for the work that they have done for the industry.

**4. Review and Certification of Well Driller and Pump Installer License Applications-**

A. Becker said that there were six license applications that the Department vetted and identified as complete. He added that five of the applicants were applying for their Environmental Resource and Geotechnical (ERG) well driller licenses and one was applying for his Journeyman well driller license. A. Becker asked if the Board had any comments on the license applicants who were deemed acceptable by the Department. No further discussion was needed on the applicants, who are listed below:

<b>License Type</b>	<b>Applicant Name</b>	<b>Employer</b>
ERG	Brian M. Karshick	Aquifer Drilling & Testing
ERG	Dezmond D. Boyce	Summit Drilling LLC
ERG	Drew E. Seabeck II	Geo Pro Inc.
ERG	Michael P. Heinrich	Geo Pro Inc.
ERG	Thomas A. McNally	Summit Drilling LLC
Journeyman	Darwin B. Reid	Summit Drilling LLC

**A motion to approve the six license applicants for licensure was made by S. Domber, seconded by G. Poppe, and approved unanimously.**

**5. Continuing Education-**

A. Becker introduced the two courses up for review from the International School of Well Drilling (ISWD). Directional Drilling I and Directional Drilling II would be the first continuing education courses for New Jersey licensees geared towards horizontal directional drilling (HDD), if approved by the Board. A. Becker added that there is currently a lot of HDD activity in New Jersey.

A. Becker asked M. Ortega if the course format would be the same as the other approved ISWD courses. M. Ortega said that he has not seen the presentation, but he has no reason to believe that the format of these two courses would be different than their other course offerings. A. Becker asked M.

Ortega if it would be possible to obtain a sample log in from ISWD since this is a new topic in which the Board is interested. E. Hoffmann offered to audit the course if a sample log in could be obtained.

A. Becker added that these courses might be good to educate drillers that are looking to get into that part of the industry. S. Reya brought up how HDD is currently used in the environmental remediation sector; HDD injection wells are sometimes permitted and installed by New Jersey licensed drillers. A. Becker agreed and talked about how there was a company in the late-1990's that did a lot of that type of work. No further discussion was needed on these two courses.

**E. Hoffmann made a motion to approve Directional Drilling I and Directional Drilling II for one technical continuing education point each and to have the Department request a sample log in for the Board. This motion was seconded by J. Yost and approved unanimously.**

A. Becker asked M. Ortega to reach out to ISWD to see if they would be willing to work with the Board and provide credentials to review these courses. S. Domber said that these courses would be helpful for Department staff who are currently working on the HDD guidance document. M. Ortega said that he will reach out to the Board after the meeting to see who is interested in auditing the course to get a headcount.

#### **6. Update on Recent Bureau Enforcement Activity-**

S. Vargo explained that the Department received responses for every Notice of Non-Compliance (NONC) that was recently sent out except for one. After review of the responses, all NONCs will be rescinded except for two, which will be referred to Water Compliance and Enforcement's Southern Region.

Well Permitting staff conducted four field visits since the last enforcement update. S. Vargo added that Well Permitting is now routinely adding permit conditions on more well permits that require the well driller to notify the Department via email a minimum three days prior to drilling to provide the date of drilling, which allows staff to visit the drill sites and oversee well installations. S. Vargo noted that some of the field visits included the Princeton geothermal well field and a double-cased well drilled in Toms River. Well Permitting staff also investigated a site with wells that were potentially lost to assist the property owner in locating them.

S. Vargo added that 21 new NONCs were sent out in May. Well Permitting is still working on clearing out the backlog of existing NONCs that were drafted but were never sent out due in part to staff retirements.

S. Vargo discussed an ongoing investigation which involves an unlicensed contractor potentially doing pump work in Rockaway Township. This well, currently permitted as a public non-community well, is believed to serve more than 25 full time residents, which would make it a public community system. The Department's view is that this well appears to be improperly classified as public non-community supply well as it will serve a community system (which would entail additional requirements that would need to be met). A. Becker asked for more information about this unlicensed individual. It was noted that a drilling contractor initially drilled the well and installed the pumping equipment, however, the above-ground portion of the pumping equipment and water lines was reportedly installed by unlicensed individuals.

A. Becker asked S. Reya for an update on the Princeton geothermal well field. S. Reya said that they are currently drilling on the West Windsor portion of the campus. He added that this phase will have approximately 300 wells. Currently, there are between 3 and 4 rigs running and the drilling is still

being overseen by third-party inspectors. S. Reya added that this phase is about halfway done. A. Becker asked which drilling companies are out doing the work. S. Reya said that Midwest Geothermal is drilling at the West Windsor portion and he believed Allied Well Drilling is continuing their work on the Princeton portion of the campus. G. Craig noted that in the process of drilling new wells, about five existing loops have been hit while drilling nearby wells. S. Reya explained the past procedures to rectify these cases. Well Permitting staff receives reports from the third party inspectors and will review them to make sure the damaged/destroyed wells that were struck are being properly decommissioned with an approved grout material.

S. Domber briefly discussed two entities that have recently been in contact with the New Jersey Geologic and Water Survey (NJGWS) regarding geothermal wells. One entity was researching the possibility of drilling an 8,000 ft. Deep well in the Newark Basin.

## **7. New Business-**

E. Hoffmann brought up a recent report from the Society of Military Engineers that discussed water quality data from samples that used uncoated bentonite pellets and coated bentonite pellets. E. Hoffmann explained that the report showed that PFAS was found in the samples with the coated pellets. E. Hoffmann described the testing procedures to the Board. He added that the PFAS compounds were found in low concentrations and none of the compounds found are currently regulated, but it serves as a good heads up for the industry.

A. Becker said that he had received an email from an environmental consultant who said that bentonite chips could no longer be used. A. Becker reached out to a representative from Baroid for clarification who provided him with information that PFAS compounds are not present in Hole Plug, as that is an uncoated form of bentonite chips.

S. Reya said that the Department will work on spreading the word. E. Hoffmann suggested contacting additional manufacturers for additional details.

A. Becker explained the difference between coated and uncoated bentonite pellets. Coated time-release pellets are typically used for deep applications. They are used because they do not immediately swell, which gives them time to reach their intended depth before swelling and potentially bridging. E. Hoffmann offered to investigate other drilling products for PFAS. Mr. Joel Bernstein added that he recently received two certifications for products that are PFAS free. A. Becker asked if he could share those certifications with himself and S. Reya. The Board discussed the manufacturing process of some available products.

A. Becker asked S. Reya to share the email he received from E. Hoffmann with the rest of the Board. Mr. Bernstein asked if S. Reya could also forward him the email as well.

E. Hoffmann reiterated that this is just an advisory at this time. Only one study has been conducted. If anyone has any specific questions, they should reach out to the product manufacturer. A. Becker expressed concern about misinformation on this subject.

**8. Adjournment-**

A. Becker thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 20, 2024.

**A motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 am was made by G. Poppe. This motion was seconded by S. Domber and approved unanimously.**