

Report From Agency

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
EXAMINING BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS, HYDROLOGISTS AND
SOIL SCIENTISTS**

IN THE MATTER OF RULEMAKING	:	REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE	:	CR 24-079
EXAMINING BOARD OF	:	
PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS,	:	
HYDROLOGISTS, AND SOIL	:	
SCIENTISTS	:	

I. THE PROPOSED RULE:

The proposed rule, including the analysis and text, is attached.

II. REFERENCE TO APPLICABLE FORMS:

N/A

III. FISCAL ESTIMATE AND EIA:

The Fiscal Estimate and EIA are attached.

IV. DETAILED STATEMENT EXPLAINING THE BASIS AND PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED RULE, INCLUDING HOW THE PROPOSED RULE ADVANCES RELEVANT STATUTORY GOALS OR PURPOSES:

The objective of the proposed rule is to create continuing education requirements for license renewal for professional hydrologists. The board believes continuing education is important for the profession to stay current with knowledge of their field and provide the best possible service for the public. Currently, professional hydrologists do not have continuing education requirements.

The proposed rule creates requirements for continuing education for professional hydrologists. General requirements are added in ch. GHSS 1, and specifics of new continuing education and renewal requirements are added in ch. GHSS 3. In each biennium, professional hydrologists will be required to complete 4 approved continuing education contact hours. The content of the courses must be substantially related to the practice of professional hydrology. A wide variety of courses and activities are allowed. The professional hydrologist section may grant exceptions to the continuing education requirements in the event of extreme hardship for a licensee.

Section 470.03 (1) (b), Stats., states that the examining board shall “[u]pon the advice of the professional hydrologist section, promulgate rules establishing requirements and standards for the practice of professional hydrology by a person who is licensed as a

professional hydrologist under this chapter, including a code of ethics that governs the practice of professional hydrology.”

Section 470.03 (2), Stats., states that “[u]pon the advice of the appropriate section of the examining board, the examining board may promulgate rules that establish continuing education requirements that a person must satisfy to be eligible to renew a license that is issued under this chapter.”

V. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND THE BOARD’S RESPONSES, EXPLANATION OF MODIFICATIONS TO PROPOSED RULES PROMPTED BY PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The board held a public hearing on the proposed rule on February 5, 2025. No written or verbal comments were received.

VI. RESPONSE TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

All Legislative Council comments except comments 5c., 5i., and 5j. have been accepted and incorporated into the proposed rules.

Comment: 5c. In SECTION 4, s. GHSS 3.07 (1) (intro.), add a comma before “which”. Also, is the requirement for four total hours of continuing education meant to be 24 hours, as proposed in companion CHR 24-078, s. GHSS 2.08 (1) (intro.)?

Response: The board agrees with the first sentence of the comment, and that change has been accepted and incorporated into the rule. Under the new numbering of the rule, this provision is now s. GHSS 3.07 (2). However, for the question raised by the remainder of the comment, the applicable rule language is written as the board intended. The board and the hydrologist section intend for the requirement to be four continuing education hours per biennium for hydrologists. The board recognizes this requirement differs from the continuing education hours for professional geologists in companion CHR 24-078.

Comment: 5i. In s. GHSS 3.07 (2) (g), consider specifying how much credit authoring is worth. Also, should the agency consider limits on maximum contact hours that may be claimed under this provision, as proposed in companion CHR 24-078, s. GHSS 2.08 (2) (g)?

Response: To the first sentence of the comment, the board would like to rely on the definition of contact hour in s. GHSS 1.02 (4) for the calculation of how much credit is earned for authoring. Under the new numbering of the rule, this provision is now s. GHSS 3.07 (4) (g). To the second sentence of the comment, the board does not feel it is necessary to set a maximum allowed number of hours for authoring, since the total number of hours required per biennium is only four. A licensee authoring a paper would likely earn four or more hours from the activity. The board rejects this comment.

Comment: 5j. In s. GHSS 3.07 (2) (h), consider how this activity relates to the definition of contact hour. The meaning of contact hour is being changed from 50 minutes to one hour in this paragraph. Alternatively, consider amending the definition of “contact hour” to acknowledge that it is not always 50 minutes. Also, should continuing education credit

for this activity be limited “, up to 8 contact hours per day”, as proposed in companion CHR 24-078, s. GHSS 2.08 (2) (h)?

Response: The board agrees with the first two sentences of the comment, and that change has been accepted and incorporated into the rule. It is clarified that field trips shall be awarded one contact hour for every 50 minutes of duration, in line with the definition of contact hour in s. GHSS 1.02 (4). Under the new numbering of the rule, this provision is now s. GHSS 3.07 (4) (h). To the last sentence of the comment, the board does not feel it is necessary to set a maximum allowed number of hours for field trips, since the total number of hours required per biennium is only four. A licensee completing a field trip would likely earn close to four hours or more from the activity.

VII. REPORT FROM THE SBRRB AND FINAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS:

N/A