

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Brittany Calame](#)
Subject: FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Thursday, August 2, 2018 4:47:02 PM

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From: sunset@sunset.texas.gov <sunset@sunset.texas.gov> On Behalf Of Texas Sunset Commission
Sent: Thursday, August 2, 2018 4:33 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission <Sunset@sunset.texas.gov>
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Agency: TEXAS BOARD PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS TBPG

First Name: Steven

Last Name: Tobias

Title: President and Professional Geophysicist

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State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or
Opposed:

I do not think that the recommendations to do away with licensing now, all these years, makes any sense at all. It is akin to saying, "who needs an airbag, I've never been in an accident".

The demographics of our industry are changing drastically, and no one knows the quality of the new geoscientists that are coming into this profession.

This should be the strongest argument for keeping licensing, not for doing away with it. When I read: "the board grandfathered about 78 percent of current licensees into the profession without licensees passing the rigorous exam" and then "Sunset staff found no examples or evidence of significant public harm directly attributable" and "The board has never received a complaint that posed significant harm or risk to the public", I really scratch my head at the logic.

78% of the members learned geoscience the hard way and survived because of intense market forces. The quacks and charlatans did not survive in the Great State of Texas because it is a big state but a small state – you've got to keep your nose clean or you're out of work. The old guys and gals now retiring are the best America has to offer, and the fact that there are few complaints just proves the point. Working together downtown has given way to social media and other alien practices that are devoid of self-policing mechanisms. Air bags, seat belts, life insurance policies, hedging commodities and slew of other mechanisms are look-forward measures that prevent bad things from happening. So is licensing.

We are losing a great generation of geoscientists, ones that set the high standards that are evidenced by a lack of quackery and their primary manifestation: complaints.

So now what? We are bringing in hundreds or thousands of new people from all over the globe that did not have the

benefit of this purely Texan “survival of the fittest” dynamic, and you want to do away with licensing requirements? Please tell me what I’m missing.

The time you encounter a big crew change is the time you need to apply quality control. Not 30 or 20 years ago, but now, and into the future.

I suspect that this hostility to licensing is a remnant of the hostility many felt to get licensed. I was part of that mob. The idea is that we were professionals, so leave us alone and keep your unnecessary bureaucracy out of our workplace. But that was then and this is now. And for those colleagues that are not licensed, hey stay that way. Some of my best friends are unlicensed geoscientists, and they are every bit as good and ethical as the licensed ones. The issue is not that they are second class citizens, they are not. This decision should be forward looking, not backwards looking.

Who on the Sunset committee can say with certainty that ten years from now we won’t be overrun with poorly educated and marginally ethical people that are not regulated by the strong culture we are all familiar with? No one, that’s who.

In summary, past history is no measure of future performance. We are in the process of losing a wonderful generation of Texas geoscientists, ones that have served the public well and of which I am proud to be a member. To welcome as unregulated a new and unproven generation who is ignorant of the strong self-policing mechanisms of pre-internet professionals is risky, to say the least.

If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

Redo the report, this time taking into consideration the most important thing that was not even considered . Namely, is the time to do this when a great "crew change" is underway? Or is the time to do this after demographics have stabilized, and the future tone of professional behavior is understood.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree