

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Brittany Calame](#)
Subject: FW: Letter of support for Texas Board for Professional Geoscientists
Date: Tuesday, August 28, 2018 3:03:02 PM

From: michael young
Sent: Tuesday, August 28, 2018 3:01 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission <Sunset@sunset.texas.gov>
Subject: Letter of support for Texas Board for Professional Geoscientists

Sunset Advisory Commission

1501 North Congress Avenue, 6th Floor

Austin, Texas 78701

Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing this letter in support of the Texas Board for Professional Geoscientists, which was recently evaluated by the Sunset Commission and recommended for abolishment. As a long-time practicing geologist, I know firsthand the key role played by professional licensure, particularly in highly technical disciplines. Professionals in responsible charge of geoscientific and engineering activities regarding health, safety, property, environmental quality or economic welfare of the public should indeed be held to the highest possible standards of practice. In my experience, licensure is a first step. Serving the public interest goes beyond establishing minimum education, experience and examination requirements; it includes action to establish and maintain a meaningful Code of Professional Conduct and rigorous, ongoing good-faith disciplinary efforts to enforce these standards.

The Sunset Report noted “*a historical lack of meaningful enforcement action, no measurable impact on public protection, and more direct oversight of geoscientists’ work provided by other state agencies’ render ongoing state regulation of geoscientists unnecessary to protect the public.*” Further, the Report states “*The board has never received a complaint that posed significant harm or risk to the public.*” We acknowledge these concerns, but it is difficult to fault the Board for not enforcing complaints, when they do not receive any. In this sense, the Board is providing the service for which it was designed. If the management of the Board was non-responsive to complaints or shoddy geologic work, or if the Board was being poorly run, then reviews would be needed of the management structure, the effectiveness of the Executive Director, and/or the actions taken by the Board and TBPG staff, not abolishing the Board itself. The agencies that deal with geologic work (Railroad Commission of Texas and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) do not have a mandate to regulate the ethics and behavior of the geoscientists themselves, only the

work products. If TBPG is abolished, no minimum expectation for geoscientist training, actions, or ethics will be codified and the quality of the geologic work in Texas will suffer, eventually eroding public confidence in the discipline. This would be a significant backward step for the State of Texas.

I urge the Sunset Commission to reconsider its recommendation to abolish the Texas Board for Professional Geoscientists, and instead provide recommendations for improving management of the Board and oversight of geoscientists. If you have any questions, please contact me at michael.young@beg.utexas.edu,

Respectfully,

/S/

Michael H. Young, Ph.D., P.G. (Texas #12363)