



CONFORMED MINUTES

THE STATE MINING AND GEOLOGY BOARD

Will Conduct a Regular Business Meeting on:

Thursday, November 20th, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

**California Natural Resources Headquarters
715 P Street, Second Floor RM 2-201
Sacramento, California 95814**

**This meeting will be held in-person and
via video conference and will be recorded.**

To avoid any background noises while the meeting is in session, we ask that you mute your device. To join the meeting, please download the latest version of MS Teams by visiting their website at <https://aka.ms/getteams> or install the MS Teams app on your phone. After installing MS Teams on your device click on the [Microsoft Teams Meeting](#) link to join the meeting **Meeting ID: 242 484 549 777 9** and **Passcode: kL2EH7Jz**. You may also join us by phone by dialing (916) 318-8892 and entering the **Phone Conference ID: 350 271 93#**

For questions or comments regarding this Agenda, please contact the Board by email at smgb@conservation.ca.gov. This Notice, the agenda, and all associated staff reports can be accessed at the SMGB's website at: <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/smgb>.



PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order (Sheingold)

Meeting was called to order by Chair Sheingold at 10:00 A.M.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Executive Officer Jeffrey Schmidt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call and Declaration of a Quorum

Regulatory Analyst Natalie Decio called roll with Members Driscoll, Holst, Jung, Landregan, Los Huertos, Zafir, Vice Chair Kenline, and Chair Sheingold present, and a Quorum was declared. Member Whyte was not in attendance.

4. Review of the Agenda (Sheingold)

Chair Sheingold reviewed the agenda and shared his regular announcements.

5. Department Reports

A. Department of Conservation Report (Tiffany)

Gabe Tiffany, Chief Deputy Director of the Department of Conservation, reported that 2025 was a significant year for the department, marked by a new director, an active legislative session, and major energy transition bills. Looking ahead to 2026, he noted that budget challenges are expected due to uncertainty surrounding federal funding and highlighted the appointment of Senator Monique Limón as state Senate President Pro Tempore, emphasizing her strong record on energy legislation and partnership with the department. Tiffany underscored the department's continued role in regulating oil, gas, and geothermal resources, advancing carbon sequestration projects under SB 905, and pursuing opportunities to meet California's climate goals. He also expressed interest in collaborating with the Board on critical minerals, reinforcing the department's commitment to sustainability and stakeholder engagement.

Following Tiffany's report, Member Los Huertos asked whether the department's federal funding comes from ongoing allocations or short-term "soft money" grants. The Chief Deputy Director explained that it is a mix, with much of it being project-based, and emphasized the need to remain fiscally cautious since federal grants may not always materialize. He noted that while federal funds make up a relatively small portion of the department's overall budget, they support important projects.

State Geologist, Jeremy Lancaster, elaborated, highlighting the USGS Earth MRI program for critical minerals mapping, which had been funded at \$64 million nationally but is now reverting to a \$10 million baseline, making competition among states much tighter. He noted that for the California Geological Survey (CGS), grant income accounts for 10–15% of its budget—significantly more than other divisions. Lancaster also described challenges with carbon sequestration and geothermal grant applications.

B. Division of Mine Reclamation Report (Whalin)

Lindsay Whalin, Supervisor of Mine Reclamation, reported that the Division's reimbursement grants with the Department of Interior (DOI) for abandoned mine land hazard identification and remediation (about \$1 million annually) are no longer being renewed. However, a new \$200,000 grant from the DOI's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance has been secured, with similar work underway in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) on state lands.

Whalin highlighted a mine site tour held in October attended by Board Chair Sheingold, Director Lucchesi, Chief Deputy Tiffany, and DOC staff, showcasing abandoned, active, and reclaimed sites to demonstrate the breadth of DMR's work. Regarding compliance, about 45 operators have not filed 2024 annual reports; staff is following up with lead agencies and operators, with enforcement pursued only when local agencies decline to act. Three penalties issued for 2023 mines in Inyo County have since been resolved. The SMARA team also hosted a well-attended inspection workshop, with plans for another session next year.

Finally, at the federal level, two bills have been introduced to fund the Abandoned Hard Rock Mine Program, which could benefit DMR if passed. Whalin also noted expedited permitting efforts for critical minerals under Fast 41 and a USGS proposal to add several minerals, including copper and silver, to the federal critical minerals list. Whalin referenced potential impacts for California mines, including Castle Mountain in San Bernardino County, and announced an upcoming meeting with county officials to strengthen SMARA coordination particularly around critical minerals given the presence of Mountain Pass, the nation's only rare earth mine.

C. California Geological Survey Report (Lancaster)

State Geologist Jeremy Lancaster announced the release of 13 new seismic hazard maps in partnership with the Board. These include liquefaction and landslide maps for Contra Costa, Sonoma, Sacramento, and Yolo counties, as well as Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zone maps for the San Gregorio Fault system in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties and the Sierra Madre Fault system in Los Angeles County.

Lancaster also updated the Board on CGS's strong motion instrumentation program. Since 2022, the survey has been upgrading seismic monitoring stations from analog to real-time reporting, with 70% of the work already completed ahead of schedule. He highlighted a pilot program with the Golden Gate Bridge Authority that uses real-time data to send alerts on structural displacement following earthquakes, supporting rapid safety decisions and resilience. Similar systems are planned for other critical facilities statewide.

During Jeremy Lancaster's report, members raised questions about sensor replacement, earthquake prediction, geology education, critical minerals, and tsunami mapping. Lancaster explained that sensor replacements are easier at single-array field stations but more complex at large facilities like hospitals, where engineering and telemetry work are required; state funding and private contracts are helping sustain progress. He emphasized that earthquakes cannot be predicted, though probability forecasts and USGS aftershock tools guide emergency response. On primary and secondary school education, he noted geology is required in some districts but not standardized statewide. He added that California is well-positioned to compete for federal critical mineral grants and reported that tsunami mapping is undergoing strategic planning with guidance from a technical advisory committee.

Lancaster closed by recognizing Rick Wilson, recently retired, with a proclamation on behalf of the DOC. Wilson was honored for his 34 years with the CGS, including 25 years in seismic hazard mapping and 16 years leading the state's tsunami program. He coordinated California's tsunami preparedness efforts, represented the state nationally, authored numerous scientific publications, and developed evacuation maps, emergency playbooks, and hazard tools that improved coastal safety. His work earned multiple awards for public service and national recognition. The DOC formally thanked him for his dedication and

contributions, and Rick expressed appreciation for the Board's support, emphasizing the importance of continued clear communication about tsunami hazards.

6. Chair Report (Sheingold)

Chair Sheingold reported ongoing communication with department, DMR, and Board staff, participation in the San Bernardino outreach program, and a visit to Harbor Cave, a remediated underground mine. He also met with Granite Rock representatives regarding anticipated quarry activity in San Benito County.

7. Executive Officer Report (Schmidt)

Executive Officer, Jeffrey Schmidt, closed out the final Board meeting of the year with a comprehensive overview of 2025 accomplishments. The Board managed a wide range of responsibilities, from electing a new vice chair and updating the Mining Ordinance Guidance document to overseeing reclamation plan amendments and site visits that ensured compliance with a PRC 2714(f) exemption that was granted by the Board. It also advanced policy work by finalizing the mineral designation rulemaking package for the Sacramento Production Consumption Region, while creating the Critical Minerals Committee to address rising demand for resource conservation. Outreach was a major focus, with workshops held in partnership with county planning directors, industry groups, and rural representatives, as well as direct meetings with counties to update local ordinances. The Board collaborated with the DMR on inspection training and presented to professional and educational audiences, including CalCIMA's Women's Committee and high school students exploring geology careers. Schmidt emphasized that 2025 was a productive year and expressed confidence that 2026 would bring equally significant activity.

8. Geologist Report (Fry, Jones)

Geologist, Mallory Jones, provided an update on recent and ongoing activities since the last meeting. Starting with the 2025 inspection cycle, the Board has completed 14 mine inspections along with inspections of 14 borrow pits along the Colorado River Aqueduct for the Metropolitan Water District, while also beginning to review FACEs for the current inspection cycle. Reclamation plan amendments for Garnet Pit and Spring Valley Quarry were reviewed, and compliance measures for Pyrite Quarry are being finalized. Jones noted additional outreach and participation, including presenting at the DOC's all staff meeting on the ongoing Mining Ordinance Update Project, attending the BCDC sand study group, joining the DMR's inspector certification workshop, and responding to a subpoena records request from San Benito County. Looking ahead, the Board will finish the inspection cycle with a visit to the Lapis Sand Mine, continue advancing mining ordinance updates, pursue rulemaking packages for 2714(f) exemptions and mineral designations, and further develop the Critical Minerals Committee.

9. Ex-Parte Communication Disclosure

Board Members will identify any discussions they may have had requiring disclosure pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 663.1 and 663.2.

No ex-parte communications disclosed.

10. Public Comment Period

This time is scheduled to provide the public with an opportunity to address non-agenda items. Those wishing to speak should do so at this time. Speaker testimony is limited to three minutes except by special consent of the Chair.

There were no public comments.

11. Consent Items

All the items appearing under this section will be acted upon by the Board by one motion and without discussion; however, any Board member wishing to discuss any item may request the Chair to remove the item from the consent calendar and consider it separately.

- A. Consideration and approval of minutes for the Regular Business Meeting held on:
September 18, 2025

During the meeting, the Board considered approval of the September 18th minutes. Vice Chair Kenline proposed minor edits to the discussion around agenda item 13B regarding a critical minerals definition. He made a suggestion to clarify that during the discussion about the committee's recommendation, committee discussions had been considered by the full board and moved to approve the minutes with those changes. Member Holst raised concerns about how voting results were recorded, noting that in the case of the critical minerals item, the minutes only reflected a majority outcome without identifying individual votes. After discussion, members agreed that going forward, outside of unanimous votes, minutes should include detailed vote counts and the names of those voting for and against each motion. This was established as a new policy to ensure clarity and historical accuracy. Kenline revised his motion to incorporate both his initial edits and the new voting documentation practice, which was seconded by Member Jung. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried 6-0 with two abstentions. Members Driscoll, Holst, Jung, Zafir, Vice Chair Kenline, and Chair Kenline voted in favor of the motion while Members Landregan and Los Huertos abstained. Member Whyte was not in attendance.

12. Regular Business Items

- A. Consideration and approval of the Garnet Pit's (Mine ID# 91-33-0031) reclamation plan amendment

Senior Geologist, Paul Fry presented on the consideration and approval of the Garnet Pit's reclamation plan amendment #4 (RPA). He explained that the Garnet Pit, a 147-acre sand and gravel mine in Palm Springs operating since the 1940s, had its reclamation plan first approved in 1990 and later amended in 2023 to allow concurrent use as an inert debris fill site. The current amendment focuses on revising revegetation methods and performance standards for the exterior berm, shifting to natural revegetation, and removing approximately 22 acres from the reclamation plan to accommodate debris fill operations. Fry emphasized that the amendment does not expand mining operations, alter the approved end use, or extend the termination date, and therefore qualifies as a non-substantial amendment under SMARA. He also noted that the project meets CEQA Class 1 and Class 4 exemptions, as it involves negligible expansion and only minor physical alterations without impacts to trees or scenic resources. The review timeline included submission in May 2025, comments from DMR in September, and revisions in October to address requests for quantitative revegetation success criteria and a noxious weed management plan. With these updates incorporated, staff concluded the amendment is consistent with regulatory requirements and recommended Board approval of RPA #4.

Following Fry's presentation, Board members discussed jurisdiction, reclamation standards, and oversight of the Garnet Pit. Member Landregan questioned why Palm Springs never adopted a mining ordinance after annexing the site, and Fry explained the city has only one mine nearing closure, leaving the Board as lead agency. Vice Chair Kenline also noted that Water Board closure permits generally supersede SMARA unless agreements are made, while Fry added that SMARA prohibits double bonding, so landfill regulation falls outside the Board's scope. Members also reviewed past "pit capture" issues, resolved by construction of a berm, and clarified that inspection costs are paid by operators through fees. On reclamation, Fry emphasized that while SMARA sets

performance standards, plans are site-specific; in Palm Springs' desert environment, natural revegetation proved more effective than artificial methods. The discussion also highlighted broader patterns of small cities annexing mines without ordinances, leaving the Board responsible.

Member Landregan then motioned to approve the Class 1 and Class 4 categorical exemption, pursuant to CEQA guidelines sections 15301 and 15304, and further approve the Garnet Pit RPA in accordance with SMARA. Member Zafir seconded, and the motion carried unanimously with all members present. Member Whyte was not in attendance.

B. Review and discussion of San Bernardino County's Draft Updated Mining Ordinance; no formal action will be taken by the Board

Vice Chair Kenline recused himself prior to this agenda item due to his former employment with San Bernardino County, the jurisdiction whose ordinance was under review. Following his exit, Geologist, Mallory Jones, presented an update on San Bernardino County's revised mining ordinance, emphasizing that the item was for Board comments rather than a formal certification. She explained that under SMARA, lead agencies must have a certified local mining ordinance, and the Board requires updates if an ordinance is out of compliance with state policy. San Bernardino initially submitted a draft ordinance in late 2023, but after receiving staff feedback, chose to completely rewrite it, conducting outreach with local operators and CalCIMA for input. The county later resubmitted a new draft, which Board staff and legal counsel reviewed and refined through collaborative meetings with county staff and their consultants. A final draft was determined to be consistent with SMARA and ready for Board review and comment. Jones noted that the Board is being asked for comments at this stage to avoid delays experienced with Solano County.

Board members reviewed San Bernardino County's updated mining ordinance, focusing on public input and consistency with the Board's guidance document. Member Landregan asked if outreach extended beyond industry groups, and staff noted that environmental organizations had engaged in the Board's guidance document update, with further opportunities for public participation during the local adoption process. Discussion also addressed deviations from the Board's template: Fry highlighted the county's detailed provisions on vested rights and permitting, while Rinke noted she had cautioned the County against citing case law, stressing it is fact-specific, subject to change, and difficult for the public to interpret. She added that the vested rights section required close scrutiny but, after thorough review, was found adequate. Member Los Huertos suggested the creation of more specific alternative templates to streamline drafting in the future, though staff emphasized the need for flexibility given each jurisdiction's unique structures. Fry concluded that Board staff believe San Bernardino's ordinance is comprehensive and could serve as a model for other counties.

Following discussion, the Board determined that the ordinance is thorough, consistent with state policy, and ready to proceed to local adoption before returning for certification, with no additional comments needing to be transmitted to the County.

C. Consideration and Approval of the 2024-2025 Annual Report

Member Landregan, chair of the Policy and Administration Committee, presented the annual report covering July 2024– July 2025. Member Los Huertos expressed appreciation for the inclusion of the enforcement section, emphasizing its importance for transparency. A motion to approve the annual report was made by Member Jung and

seconded by Member Zafir. Roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. Member Whyte was not in attendance; the annual report was approved for submission to the legislature.

D. Consideration and Approval of the 2026 SMGB Meeting Schedule

Chair Sheingold introduced the proposed 2026 meeting calendar, which schedules monthly meetings with the understanding that some may be canceled if agendas are light. Member Los Huertos suggested designating months with historically low activity, such as December, to avoid unnecessary scheduling, while staff and Vice Chair Kenline stressed the need for flexibility to address appeals and other time-sensitive matters. Member Holst expressed support for holding some meetings in Southern California to reflect mining activity, and Executive Officer Schmidt noted the Board had met in different regions prior to COVID and could consider an annual trip in the future, though Chair Sheingold cautioned that budget constraints may limit travel.

Member Los Huertos moved to adopt the 2026 calendar, seconded by Member Zafir. The motion carried unanimously among members present, with Members Jung and Whyte absent.

13. Presentations, Reports, and Informational Items

A. *Mining Ordinance Update Project, Progress Update* (SMGB Staff)

Geologist Mallory Jones updated the Board on the mining ordinance project, noting progress with lead agencies in both Group 0 and Group 1. Shasta and Mendocino Counties are still undergoing review after multiple comment rounds with their consultants. Jones reported the City of Susanville is not long perusing drafting a mining ordinance at this time, while the initial engagement with San Diego and Humboldt Counties has gone well leading to an agreement to biweekly meetings to work through ordinances section by section, a new approach intended to reduce delays compared to lengthy rounds of written comments. Merced County indicated that they are finalizing a consultant contract to update their mining ordinance.

Board members raised questions about the efficiency of the process. Vice Chair Kenline asked about San Diego's responsiveness given its ordinance is embedded in its grading ordinance, and Jones confirmed both San Diego and Humboldt have been eager to collaborate. Member Los Huertos questioned why some counties required multiple rounds of comments, and Jones explained regular scheduled meetings have been noted to be more effective. It was added that reviewing ordinances in smaller sections avoids the difficulty of tracking cascading issues across lengthy drafts. Lessons learned from San Bernardino and other counties should make future reviews faster.

14. Executive Session (Closed to the Public)

The Board will discuss information from its legal counsel on potential litigation and may take appropriate actions based on this information. This session is being held under Government Code, Section 11126.

No executive session was held.

15. Announcements and Future Meetings

The next Regular Business Meeting will be held on January 15, 2026.

16. Adjournment

Member Landregan moved to adjourn, seconded by Vice Chair Kenline. Chair Sheingold declared the motion unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 P.M.

THE STATE MINING AND GEOLOGY BOARD

THE BOARD

The State Mining and Geology Board (Board) serves as a regulatory, policy, and appeals body representing the State's interests in the reclamation of mined lands, geology, geologic and seismologic hazards, and the conservation of mineral resources.

The Board was established in 1885 as the Board of Trustees to oversee the activities of the State Mineralogist and the California Division of Mines and Geology (now the California Geological Survey). It is second oldest Board in California. Today's Board has nine members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate, for four-year terms. By statute, Board members must have specific professional backgrounds in geology, mining engineering, environmental protection, groundwater hydrology and rock chemistry, urban planning, landscape architecture, mineral resource conservation, and seismology, with one member representing the general public.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Board is to provide professional expertise and guidance, and to represent the State's interest in the development, utilization, and conservation of mineral resources, the reclamation of mined lands and the development and dissemination of geologic and seismic hazard information to protect the health and welfare of the people of California.

STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The Board is an independent entity within the Department of Conservation under the Natural Resources Agency and is granted responsibilities and obligations under the following acts:

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975

Under this Act, Public Resources Code Sections 2710 et seq. and its regulations at 14 California Code of Regulations Section 3500 et seq., the Board provides a comprehensive surface mining and reclamation policy to assure that adverse environmental impacts are minimized, and mined lands are reclaimed. SMARA also encourages the production, conservation, and protection of the State's mineral resources.

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act

Under this Act, Public Resources Code Section 2621 through Section 2630, and its regulations at 14 California Code Regulations Section 3600 et seq., the Board is authorized to represent the State's interests in establishing guidelines and standards for geological and geophysical investigations and reports produced by the California Geological Survey, public sector agencies, and private practitioners. The Board is also authorized to develop specific criteria through regulations to be used by Lead Agencies in complying with the provisions of the Act to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Seismic Hazards Mapping Act

Under this Act, Public Resources Code Section 2690 through Section 2699.6 and its regulations at 14 California Code of Regulations Section 3720 et seq. the Board is authorized to provide policy and guidance through regulations for a statewide seismic hazard mapping and technical advisory program to assist cities, counties, and State agencies in fulfilling their responsibilities for protecting the public health and safety from the effects of strong ground shaking, liquefaction or other ground failure, landslides and other seismic hazards caused by earthquakes, including tsunami and seiche threats.

GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION ABOUT BOARD MEETINGS

The Board is governed by the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act that requires the Board to:

- 1) Publish an Agenda at least ten days in advance of any meeting
- 2) Describe in the Agenda specific items to be transacted or discussed
- 3) Refuse to add an item no later than ten days prior to any meeting and republishing of the agenda
- 4) Call a closed session by the Chair to discuss litigation and other matters
- 5) Make all testimony, files, and documents part of the administrative record

Other Agenda material and reports will be available approximately one week prior to the scheduled Board meeting. All Board related information is available at <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/smgb>.

The Board encourages the submittal of comments, written material, or technical reports thirty days prior to the applicable Board meeting. All such material concerning any matters on the agenda can be submitted to: smgb@conservation.ca.gov or addressed to:

**State Mining and Geology Board
715 P Street, MS 1909
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Following the Board meetings, links to presentations and meeting recordings will be available upon request: smgb@conservation.ca.gov