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## Licensing Geologists in Texas: History, Current Status, Questions and Answers

In the early 1970s Charles F. Dodge approached AAPG with a proposal to support legislation in Texas that would license geologists. In 1986 several geologists working in the engineering geological community approached the Texas Board of Professional Engineers with a proposal to license engineering geologists. Both proposals were rejected for various reasons.

In 1992 a Task Force was formed to actively pursue legislation that would license geologists in Texas. A licensing bill was drafted and a sponsor was found in the Texas House. The bill was introduced and was met with strong opposition from the engineering lobby. Over the next 10 years, the bill was modified to improve language, include language changes negotiated with engineering organizations and other interested parties, and include geophysicists and soil scientists. The bill continued to draw opposition from factions within the engineering and petroleum communities, resulting in a rift within the Task Force. The Texas Association of Professional Geoscientists (TAPG) was formed out of the rift.

In 2001, the Task Force, AIPG, AEG, AAPG, and TAPG with support from Former Speaker of the House, Billy Clayton, Mr. Fred Agnich, and elements of HGS, DGS, STGS and AGS combined forces to present a unified front to the legislature. A publication titled "The Value of Licensing Geologists in Texas," edited by W. Kevin Coleman, coauthored by Peter M. Allen, W. Kevin Coleman, Christopher C. Mathewson, Bruce K. Darling, and John K. Mikels, with support of AEG, AIPG, and Reed Engineering Group, laid out the need for licensing geologists in Texas. The publication was presented to the State Affairs Committee of the Texas Senate and to the Licensing and Administrative Procedures Committee of the House and was later distributed to the full Senate. SB 405 passed the Texas

Legislature and was signed into law on May 11, 2001. This marked the end of a very long, hard effort.

By November 2002, the Governor's Office had appointed eight of the nine board members mandated by the bill. It was understood the final board member (a public member) was then serving as a public member of the Engineering Board, and when available, if he or she were still interested, would be appointed to the Geoscience Board. However, the board was not funded, and the board could not meet. In May 2002, details of an emergency deficiency grant from the Governor's Office were worked out and the first meeting was scheduled.

The Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists first met on May 28, 2002. A memorandum of understanding (contract) with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation was signed that would provide administrative support for the first year within the emergency deficiency grant budget. This included drafting and adoption of the Strategic Plan, Fiscal Note, and Rules, and getting the program under way.

Although the board started approximately six months behind schedule, license applications were available on October 31, 2002, only two months behind schedule.

Applications, reference forms, and instructions (check list) can be downloaded from the Board Website at [www.tbpg.state.tx.us](http://www.tbpg.state.tx.us). ■

### Biographical Sketch

W. KEVIN COLEMAN is a native of Texas. He has a BS in geology from University of Texas at Arlington, and an MS in geology from Texas A&M. He was a geologist for Sun Exploration and Production Company from 1980 to 1986. He attended Texas >

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A&M from 1987 to 1991, specializing in engineering geology and hydrogeology. He worked as an engineering geologist and hydrogeologist for Raba-Kistner Consultants in San Antonio and returned to Dallas in 1994 to work as an engineering geologist and hydrogeologist for Reed Engineering Group. He has managed over 950 projects for Reed Engineering in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mexico, and Anguila. Projects have included management of geotechnical engineering projects including the geologic and groundwater components, ground- and surface-water mitigation and ground-water supply. He has also conducted geologic assessments and mapping of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge and Transition Zones in Bexar and Comal Counties and managed the geophysical investigation of Sombrero Island (Anguila).



Mr. Coleman served as President of the Texas Section of AIPG in 1998 and as Texas Section Chair of the Association of Engineering Geologists (AEG) from 1998 to 2000. He served on the Task Force for the Licensure of Geoscientists in Texas from 1994 to 2001. Mr. Coleman developed and managed the Task Force Communications Network from 1994 to 2000, when he became Chairman of the Task Force. He was awarded the Public Service Award by the Texas Section of AIPG in 1996 for his work with the Task Force, and the AEG Texas Section Floyd T. Johnston Award for Outstanding Engineering Geologist in 1998. Currently Mr. Coleman is serving as Chairman of the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists.

**EDWARD G. MILLER** received his BS in geology from Texas A&M University in 1972. He began his professional career with Raba and Associates Consulting Engineers in San Antonio, in 1973, as a staff geologist. Over the next few years he became director of field exploration and testing and then vice president of geology and exploration for Raba-Kistner Consultants. In 1986, he became senior vice president of geosciences. In 1994, Mr. Miller joined Pape-Dawson Consulting Engineers to expand their services in the geoscience area.



Mr. Miller has managed over 150 miles of cross-country exploration programs for pipelines and high-voltage power lines for fossil-fuel and nuclear power plants. He has also managed inves-

tigative programs for hazardous waste characterization and site evaluation. He has conducted geologic assessments and mapping of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge and Transition Zones and hydrogeologic surveys for groundwater characterization at existing and proposed landfill sites in Texas and Florida. He has managed siting and installation of municipal and industrial water supply wells and reserves evaluation for limestone aggregates and other minerals.

Mr. Miller is a member of AIPG, the Association of Engineering Geologists (AEG), the National Groundwater Association (NGWA), and the South Texas Geological Society. He has served as AEG Texas Section chairman and vice-chairman and chairman of the AEG National Convention in San Antonio in 1993. Mr. Miller was involved in some initial efforts to license geologists in 1988 and served on the Task Force for the Licensure of Geoscientists from 1992 to 1995 and again from 2000 to 2001.

Currently, Mr. Miller is serving as vice-chairman of the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists and as lead member of the rules work group for the board.