



Publication Date: Friday, June 5th, 2026

CONFORMED MINUTES

THE STATE MINING AND GEOLOGY BOARD

Will Conduct a Regular Business Meeting on:

Thursday, June 18th, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

**California Natural Resources Headquarters
715 P Street, First Floor Auditorium RM 1-302
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: 286 021 035 046 350** and **Passcode: nC6M777V**. You may also join us by phone by dialing (916) 318-8892 and entering the **Phone Conference ID: 347 568 881#**

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)

The 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, Jung, Landregan, Whyte, Vice Chair Kenline, and Chair Sheingold present, and a Quorum was declared. Members Holst, Los Huertos, and Zafir were 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)

Chief Deputy Director Gabe Tiffany reported that the Department of Conservation (DOC) has launched a new cross-agency collaboration focused on long-term mining policy in California, with particular emphasis on critical minerals and the state's energy transition. The group includes agencies within the California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, and GoBiz. They have held one meeting so far, and the effort aims to develop future policy recommendations regarding mining in the state. Tiffany noted this is a new initiative and that more updates will follow.

B. Division of Mine Reclamation Report (Whalin)

Filling in for the Division of Mine Reclamation (DMR) Supervisor, Lindsay Whalin, Chief Deputy Director Gabe Tiffany reported that DMR recently held a surface mining inspection workshop with strong participation from lead agencies. Whalin and Abandoned Mines Unit manager Kyle Johnson also attended federal meetings focused on abandoned mines and emerging technologies for recovering critical minerals from mine waste. The Chair asked about budget impacts, and Tiffany noted that the Board's budget remains unchanged, and that DMR's database modernization will likely be funded and is nearing implementation.

Closing out the discussion, Vice Chair Kenline raised questions about how recovering critical minerals from mine waste would interact with existing SMARA requirements for metallic minerals, especially backfill regulations. Tiffany said these technical and policy issues are exactly what the new cross-agency mining policy effort aims to examine, including potential regulatory or statutory adjustments to support critical mineral supply needs. He agreed to follow up with Kenline for a deeper technical discussion before the next meeting.

C. California Geological Survey Report (Lancaster)

State Geologist Jeremy Lancaster reported that the California Geologic Survey (CGS) has completed the most detailed geologic map of the Sierra Nevada, the first phase of the new Digital Earth Science Atlas. Developed with the USGS over the last five and a half years, the map supports hazard, resource, and planning decisions. He also noted the recent update of Map Sheet 52, which compares permitted aggregate reserves to 50-year demand.

Lancaster informed the Board that the federal Earth MRI program, which has been a major source of funding for California's mineral mapping, will experience a federal budget

reduction after FY-27. He explained that this program has not only supported extensive geological, geophysical, and geochemical investigations but has also allowed CGS to rebuild critical minerals expertise that had been lacking for decades. With the funding drop, CGS's final fully supported project will focus on nickel-cobalt laterite deposits in northern California, conducted jointly with the Oregon Geological Survey. After this project, CGS anticipates shifting from comprehensive, integrated mapping efforts to more limited geochemical reconnaissance due to reduced resources.

During the discussion, Board members asked about access to the Sierra Nevada map, and Lancaster confirmed it is publicly available online at a 1:400,000 scale. Members also sought clarification on the reasons for the federal funding cuts; Lancaster explained that they stem from the expiration of temporary IIJA funding rather than program performance. He noted that several national organizations, including the National Mining Association, are actively advocating for continued or restored funding.

6. Chair Report (Sheingold)

The Chair reported on an outreach trip to Visalia in Tulare County with department staff to meet with the Tulare County lead agency and discuss SMARA compliance. The visit helped clarify expectations and strengthen communication. He also participated in an interagency meeting with the Energy Commission, Land Use and Climate Innovation, and GO-Biz, where the group discussed shared priorities and the importance of critical minerals in meeting state goals. Further collaboration on this topic is anticipated.

7. Executive Officer Report (Schmidt)

Executive Officer, Jeffrey Schmidt, provided an update on ongoing Board activities. Draft mineral designation language for the Merced, Saugus–Newhall, and San Fernando Valley areas has been completed and is ready for Board review, and work has begun on the Temescal Valley designation. Staff have reviewed public comments for the 2714(f) rulemaking, prepared responses, and updated the regulatory text, which is now under legal review.

On May 21, CGS released preliminary Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zone and seismic hazard zone technical reports, beginning a 90-day review period. A public comment meeting is planned for July 30. Staff are also coordinating with CGS to update the Mineral Classification and Designation Guidelines, with the Critical Minerals Committee expected to meet next month. Schmidt finally noted challenges related to the Governor's July 1 return-to-office mandate, as Board staff are currently without permanent office space. Efforts to secure space are ongoing.

8. Geologist Report (Fry, Jones)

Senior Geologist Paul Fry reported that all but one inspection report for the current cycle has been completed, along with annual financial assurance reviews. A more comprehensive update on the 2025 inspection cycle will be provided at the next meeting. Fry briefed the Board on the Spring Valley Quarry, where staff and legal counsel are reviewing a reclamation plan amendment, CEQA initial study, and vested rights determination submitted by the operator.

Regarding the Pyrite Quarry, staff's January 2026 inspection found no new violations and noted site improvements. The operator is addressing boundary encroachments, has submitted an interim financial assurance estimate now under DMR review, and is continuing work related to stormwater pond management and ongoing litigation with Jurupa Valley.

He also highlighted recent coordination efforts, including outreach and training events, work with Merced County on its mining ordinance update, ongoing collaboration with CGS on the mineral guideline's revisions, and participation in DOC's AI Integration Working Group.

Following Fry's report, Vice Chair Kenline asked for clarification on the Spring Valley Quarry's vested rights. Fry confirmed Yuba County issued a final determination in 2021 and that the operator's reclamation plan amendment is intended to align operations with those vested rights. Kenline also asked about the Board's role in reviewing the amendment; Fry explained that legal counsel is helping determine the amendment type and ensuring compliance with SMARA and relevant case law.

Regarding the Pyrite Quarry, Kenline questioned how out-of-bounds areas would be reclaimed. Fry noted the upper encroachment was minor and surficial, and current surveys show slopes still meet reclamation standards.

Kenline then asked how the Board verifies general plan updates that incorporate new mineral maps. Fry explained that staff monitor CEQA filings, including general plan updates, and recently ensured the City of Marysville incorporated newly designated areas. He noted that staff plan to resume more active monitoring of mineral resource management plans with hopes that the Board will discuss how best to implement this as the mineral guideline updates move forward.

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

Adam Harper with California Construction and Industrial Materials Association (CalCIMA) announced that Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 157 will be heard on the Assembly floor on June 22 and encouraged board members to tune in. This measure would commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975. He also commended the Map Sheet 52 report and suggested that the Mineral Resources Committee consider how to communicate its findings to local agencies, noting several jurisdictions with limited permitted reserves. He emphasized that clearer outreach could help local governments use the map effectively in planning and offered CalCIMA's support in those efforts.

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:

March 12th, 2026

Member Jung moved to adopt the minutes, and Vice Chair Kenline seconded the motion. Members Driscoll, Jung, Whyte, Vice Chair Kenline, and Chair Sheingold voted in favor; Member Landregan abstained; Members Holst, Los Huertos, and Zafir were absent. The motion passed with five votes in favor and one abstention.

12. Regular Business Items

A. Consideration of preliminary regulatory language and approval to start pre-rulemaking activities for the Board's designation of mineral lands in Merced County

Geologist Mallory Jones provided an overview of SMARA's mineral classification and designation framework, emphasizing the Board's authority under PRC sections 2755 and 2790 and the role of designation in conserving significant mineral resources amid increasing urbanization.

Jones summarized CGS's Special Report 252, which identifies ten MRZ-2 sectors in Merced County recommended for designation. These proposed designations would conserve an estimated 1.9 billion tons of concrete aggregate resources. She displayed the sector maps that would be incorporated by reference into the regulations and noted that the preliminary language, drafted in coordination with DOC, would create a new section in the California Code of Regulations.

She explained that pre-rulemaking activities will include workshops with affected lead agencies and the public to gather information needed for the formal rulemaking package. Jones emphasized that this is the earliest stage of the process and that additional public meetings will occur during formal rulemaking.

Following the presentation, Member Landregan moved that the Board approve the preliminary regulatory language for the Board's designation of mineral lands in Merced County and direct Board staff to proceed with the pre-rulemaking activities. Member Jung seconded the motion. Members Driscoll, Jung, Landregan, Whyte, Vice Chair Kenline, and Chair Sheingold voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Consideration of preliminary regulatory language and approval to start pre-rulemaking activities for the Board's termination of some previously designated mineral lands in the Saugus-Newhall and San Fernando Valley Production Consumption Regions

Geologist Mallory Jones explained the Board's authority under PRC 2793 to terminate designations when mineral deposits are depleted, or land uses have become incompatible. She summarized CGS Special Report 254 (2021), which reevaluated aggregate resources in the Saugus-Newhall and San Fernando Valley production consumption regions and recommended boundary revisions due to urbanization. No new mineral lands were identified.

Jones reviewed proposed map updates and regulatory language changes. In the San Fernando Valley, certain areas would be fully terminated, resulting in a reduction of designated acreage, though the regulatory text remains largely unchanged aside from updated introductions and maps. In the Saugus-Newhall region, some designated areas would be partially terminated and split into new subsectors to reflect current conditions.

If ultimately adopted, the terminations would remove approximately 126 acres of designated land in the San Fernando Valley and about 1,630 acres in the Saugus-Newhall region. Jones emphasized that this stage is preliminary and intended to support outreach workshops, gather information for the formal rulemaking documents, and assess potential impacts.

Following the presentation, members asked for clarification on what makes previously designated mineral lands "incompatible with mining." Jones explained it generally reflects urbanization or zoning changes that prevent future extraction. Members also expressed concern about dwindling aggregate supplies, increased disaster-related demand, and local planning decisions that overlook mineral resources. Jones and Fry emphasized that while

SMARA requires lead agencies to consider mineral resources, designation does not prevent development; it simply ensures mineral impacts are addressed during CEQA review.

Members discussed the Board's role in commenting on CEQA projects and the need for improved monitoring and updated mineral guidelines. Questions were also raised about the purpose of terminating designations and whether CEQA applies. Jones noted terminations remove Board involvement, but classified mineral information still remains for local planning; Fry added terminations are recommended when CGS finds areas already developed with incompatible land uses and are no longer realistically mineable.

CalCIMA's Adam Harper closed out the discussion with support of terminating unmineable lands, stressing that accurate designations are essential for realistic resource planning and future permitting. He highlighted regional aggregate shortages, infrastructure needs, and the importance of clearer communication with local agencies.

Member Jung then moved to approve the preliminary regulatory language for the Board's termination of some previously designated mineral lands in the Saugus-Newhall and San Fernando Valley Production Consumption Regions and direct Board staff to proceed with the pre rulemaking activities. Vice Chair Kenline seconded the motion. Members Driscoll, Jung, Landregan, Whyte, Vice Chair Kenline, and Chair Sheingold all voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Presentations, Reports, and Informational Items

A. V-Eagle Critical Materials Project (Richard Dunham, President & Co-Founder, VTRU Corporation)

Richard Dunham, President and Co-founder of VTRU Corporation, described his company's commercial-scale rare-earth element separation technology and its relevance to current global supply chain challenges. He emphasized the significant gap in U.S. processing capacity, noting that over 90% of rare earths are refined overseas and that critical materials like zirconium and hafnium—used in nuclear, semiconductor, and defense applications—are currently sourced only from China and Russia.

Dunham explained that VTRU's technology separates mixed rare-earth oxides into high-purity individual elements needed for magnets, electronics, energy systems, and defense components. The process is commercially proven overseas and would be deployed in the U.S. for the first time. VTRU does not mine or handle radioactive feedstock; all materials are preprocessed and FEOC-compliant. The company is exploring the Mojave-Barstow region for a separation facility due to its infrastructure, transportation access, and suitability for large-scale chemical processing.

He outlined the anticipated facility design and operations: no tailings, no radioactive materials, limited emissions, water recycling, solar energy integration, and 24/7 operation. The project involves a two-phase investment of roughly \$1.25 billion and would create about 150 permanent technical and engineering jobs. Dunham emphasized that midstream processing is the key missing link in the domestic critical minerals supply chain and that VTRU's project aims to address that vulnerability by establishing U.S.-based refining capability.

Following the presentation the Board had a number of questions. Members asked about the safety and sourcing of VTRU's feedstock; Dunham confirmed all materials would arrive preprocessed and free of radioactive elements. Questions about site selection and

permitting led Dunham to highlight the Mojave–Barstow region’s infrastructure, workforce, and transport advantages despite California’s stricter regulations.

Members also asked about facility scale, production capacity, and traffic impacts. Dunham described an 8,000-metric-ton annual operation requiring roughly 180–240 acres, with efforts to rely on rail and minimize community disruption. He noted the process involves standard chemical handling and no radioactive waste.

Final questions focused on comparisons to other U.S. processors and the market for VTRU’s products. Dunham emphasized that all separation would occur in-house and that the company aims to support domestic manufacturing, especially as China’s tightening export controls may limit U.S. access to critical minerals.

B. Mining Ordinance Update Project, Progress Update (SMGB Staff)

Regulatory Analyst Natalie Decio provided an update on the Board’s mining ordinance update project. In Group 0 Solano and San Benito counties have fully completed and certified ordinance updates. San Bernardino’s update is finished and in the local adoption process with a Planning Commission hearing expected in July. Shasta and Mendocino are mostly complete with Shasta County’s expected to be brought to the Board for comments in an upcoming regular business meeting.

In Group 1, biweekly meetings continue with Humboldt and San Diego counties, and Merced County has now joined the group. A kickoff workshop was held in April, and regular meetings have begun with good progress.

For Group 2, Plumas County has already reached out and scheduled a kickoff meeting for next week while engagement letters for Ventura, Inyo, and Tulare counties are prepared work will begin later this year.

14. Executive Session (Closed to the Public)

No executive session was held.

15. Announcements and Future Meetings

Executive Officer Schmidt announced that the Critical Minerals Committee will meet on July 16. He also announced that a July 30 hearing will be held to gather public comments on the preliminary review maps for the proposed Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones and proposed Seismic Hazard Zones, followed by a regular Board meeting on August 20.

16. Adjournment

Member Landregan motioned to adjourn, and the June 18, 2026, regular business meeting was unanimously adjourned at 12:23 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
Sacramento, CA 95814

Following the Board meetings, links to presentations and meeting recordings will be available upon request: smgb@conservation.ca.gov