



CONFORMED MINUTES

THE STATE MINING AND GEOLOGY BOARD

Will Conduct a Regular Business Meeting on:

Thursday, March 12th, 2026, 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: 261 012 028 391 51** and **Passcode: kD3LK9Vw**. You may also join us by phone by dialing (916) 318-8892 and entering the **Phone Conference ID: 182 157 442#**

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

Filling in for the Director, Assistant Director of Administration Clayton Haas reported that the department submitted one Budget Change Proposal (BCP) for the California Geological Survey's (CGS) Strong Motion Program, which received a "vote-only" hearing—an encouraging sign for approval as it moves forward. Additionally, Haas noted that spring finance letters are in progress, with details pending the May Budget Revise set to be released tentatively on May 10.
 - B. Division of Mine Reclamation Report (Balestreri)**

Filling in for DMR Supervisor Lindsay Whalin, Reporting Unit Manager April Balestreri provided an overview of recent DMR and Abandoned Mine Lands unit (AML) activities. The AML unit executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with State Parks on January 30 to formalize collaboration on abandoned mine safety and remediation. DMR staff participated in multiple February meetings related to the EPA Good Samaritan Program and national AML coordination efforts, including presentations on GIS tools and wildlife-friendly closure practices. Staff also attended the National Association of Abandoned Mine Lands winter business meeting and supported a national AML inventory workshop.

Upcoming activities include a site visit to the Mountain Pass Mine on April 2 and a Coordinated Outreach to Lead Agencies (COLA) meeting with Tulare County on April 6 to discuss SMARA roles and challenges. Additionally, DMR will host an inspection training workshop on May 13, with registration now open.
 - C. California Geological Survey Report (TBD)**

Nothing to report.
- 6. Chair Report (Sheingold)**

The Chair reported ongoing coordination with DOC and DMR staff and participation in three working groups developing potential future initiatives. He also joined board staff on a site visit to the Lapis Sand Mine in Marina to review reclamation efforts at the closed facility.
- 7. Executive Officer Report (Schmidt)**

Executive Officer Jeffrey Schmidt reported continued progress on the Mining Ordinance Update project, with several counties nearing completion of their updated ordinances for potential Board comments at the next meeting. Rulemaking efforts are ongoing, including updates

related to SMARA Exemption 2714(f), seven mineral designation rulemaking packages, PRC 2207 annual reporting fees for lithium brine operations, and revisions to the Board's mineral classification and designation guidelines, which will incorporate a definition of critical minerals.

Additionally, staff recently presented to department leadership on the Board's history and current projects. Schmidt also announced the retirement of Clayton Haas, congratulated staff member Natalie Decio on her promotion to Analyst II, and recognized Chair Sheingold and Member Landregan for their reappointments to the Board.

During questions, Schmidt confirmed there is currently no known lithium production from geothermal brine operations at the Salton Sea and no timeline indicators for when production may begin. He also clarified that the updated definition of critical minerals will be included in the revised guidelines.

8. Geologist Report (Fry, Jones)

Geologist Mallory Jones reported that staff completed annual inspections for the 2025 cycle and are reviewing incoming financial assurance cost estimates (FACES). She noted ongoing work on the Spring Valley Reclamation Plan amendment and described a December 19 inspection at the Cemex Lapis Mine with DOC leadership and the Chair, where staff gave an overview of the history of the site and explained the inspection process.

Senior Geologist Paul Fry provided an update on the Pyrite Quarry stipulated order to comply. All benchmarks in the order have been met to date, and the operator submitted the required interim FACE on March 10. Fry explained that the team definitively identified the areas that were outside of the boundary during the January 30 inspection with a licensed surveyor. He also noted that issues related to imported fill and the site's pond remain under negotiation or pending operator decisions.

Regulatory Analyst Natalie Decio reported continued advancement of the Mining Ordinance Update Project. Shasta and Mendocino counties are finalizing draft ordinances for Board review, while San Bernardino County is preparing for its local adoption hearing. Decio highlighted the effectiveness of biweekly working meetings with Humboldt and San Diego counties, which have helped identify missing sections, resolve inconsistencies, and streamline the update process—an improvement over earlier, slower update cycles. Concluding the report, Decio summarized recent outreach and coordination efforts, including participation in COLA meetings, DOC orientations, working groups, and the DOC Discoveries Expo.

Following the report, there were several follow up questions and discussions. Board members briefly brought up outstanding issues at the Pyrite Quarry, the permitting framework for Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) sand-mining operations, the timeline for upcoming ordinance-update cohorts, and whether any lead agencies may require additional encouragement to stay on track. Staff clarified that water-quality matters at the Pyrite Quarry have been referred to the Water Board, and the Board's role in the BCDC dredge mining is essentially limited to financial assurance review. Additionally, future lead agency groups for ordinance updates are already identified, with outdated ordinances often signaling where additional support may be needed.

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

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:
November 20, 2025

The Board considered approval of the November 2025 meeting minutes. Member Jung moved to adopt the minutes, and Vice Chair Kenline seconded the motion. Members Driscoll, Holst, Jung, Zafir, Vice Chair Kenline, and Chair Sheingold voted in favor; Member Whyte abstained; Members Landregan and Los Huertos were absent. The motion passed with six votes in favor and one abstention.

Following the vote Member Driscoll requested that draft minutes be provided sooner after each meeting to allow for more timely review. Staff confirmed they can accommodate this change moving forward.

12. Regular Business Items

- A. Consideration and adoption of the 2025 Annual Mine Fee Schedule pursuant to Public Resources Code section 2207.

Senior Geologist Paul Fry and Assistant Director of Administration Clayton Haas presented the proposed 2025 annual mine fee schedule, explaining statutory requirements under PRC 2207, cost-of-living adjustments, and the need to maintain adequate funding for SMARA programs. It was noted that the overall revenue need increased by approximately \$380,000 due to higher DMR expenditures, a significant rise in statewide pro rata charges, and the need to replenish the prudent reserve. Graphs illustrating operator distribution across fee categories and year-to-year fee changes were reviewed. Staff recommended adoption of the updated fee schedule.

Following the presentation, Member Jung moved to adopt the 2025 fee schedule, and Member Holst seconded the motion. Members Driscoll, Holst, Jung, Whyte, Zafir, Vice Chair Kenline, and Chair Sheingold voted in favor. Members Landregan and Los Huertos were absent. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Presentations, Reports, and Informational Items

- A. *SMARA@50: Documenting Fifty Years of California Reclamation*
(Adam Harper, California Construction and Industrial Materials Association (CalCIMA))

CalCIMA representative Adam Harper presented an overview of the statewide "SMARA 50" initiative, which aims to document and highlight 50 years of reclamation outcomes under the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act. He described the effort as a historical and public-information project intended to capture how reclamation has functioned in practice, preserve institutional memory, and showcase successful post-mining land uses across California. The initiative will include outreach to lead agencies, operators, and stakeholders; development of an archival record using modern tools such as Google Earth; and a reclamation recognition program to highlight exemplary projects.

Harper emphasized the Board's central role in SMARA's development and implementation and invited Board participation in sharing historical context, materials, and perspectives. He noted that award submissions are expected by June 1, with recognition planned at CalCIMA's 2026 annual conference.

Board members engaged in discussion about the initiative's goals, examples of reclaimed sites, agricultural reclamation practices, and the challenges of reconstructing historical records. Questions also touched on comparisons with other states, the importance of documenting end uses, and the value of agency involvement in preserving long-term institutional knowledge. Harper indicated that CalCIMA intends to gather broad input before offering recommendations on future improvements to SMARA implementation.

**B. SMARA in Action: Effective Mine Reclamation Under SMGB Authority
(SMGB Staff)**

Senior Geologist Paul Fry presented two examples of reclamation projects under the Board's lead-agency authority, highlighting how SMARA requirements translate into on-the-ground restoration outcomes. He began by outlining the Board's responsibilities as a SMARA lead agency, noting that the Board oversees 49 mining operations across several jurisdictions.

Fry first discussed the Cemex Lapis Plant in Marina, a former coastal sand mine with operations dating back to 1906. He described the site's phased reclamation following a settlement agreement requiring cessation of mining, habitat restoration, and eventual land use for conservation purposes. Portions of the mine have already met reclamation performance standards, with financial assurances released for reclaimed areas. He showed examples of restored habitat, removal of mining infrastructure, and natural recovery of the former dredge pond. Fry noted that decisions about public access and preservation of historic structures are still under negotiation between the operator and conservation groups.

Fry then presented the Wheatland Clay Pit in Yuba County, where mining occurred on prime agricultural land. After removal of a shallow clay layer, the operator replaced topsoil and replanted orchards as required by the reclamation plan. The site has been fully restored to agricultural use, with inspections confirming successful reclamation in 2021.

Following the presentation, Board members discussed the value of public access to reclaimed sites, opportunities for interpretive signage, and the importance of showcasing successful reclamation to the public. Members also reflected on the broader history of mining in California, and the scale of major restoration projects such as the Hallwood floodplain restoration. Additional questions addressed future land uses, the prevalence and applications of clay mining, and comparisons to reclamation practices in other states.

14. Executive Session (Closed to the Public)

No executive session was held.

15. Announcements and Future Meetings

Deputy Attorney General Nicole Rinke announced that a public comment letter related to Item 12A (the annual mine fee schedule) was received the day before the meeting. The letter was distributed to Board members, made available in hard copy at the meeting, and will be posted online following the meeting. Additionally, Executive Officer Schmidt announced that the next Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 16.

16. Adjournment

Member Jung moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Whyte. Chair Sheingold declared the motion unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 A.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