

MINUTES
South Carolina Environmental Certification Board
Exam Review Committee
September 9, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.
Synergy Business Park, Kingstree Building
110 Centerview Drive, Columbia, SC 29210
Midlands Conference Room

Call to Order

Chair Phillip Thompson-King called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Other members present included: James Matthews, John Young, Brett Butz, Rip Tafta, and Elizabeth Peirczynski. Staff members present included Hardwick Stuart, Advice Counsel; Johnnie L. Rose, Jr., Board Executive; and Cleve Langdale, Program Coordinator. Also attending was Tom Healy, of Water Professionals International.

Statement of Public Notice

Chair Phillip Thompson-King state that public notice of this meeting was properly posted at the S.C. Board of Environmental Certification office, Synergy Business Park, Kingstree Building, and provided to all requesting persons, organizations, and news media in compliance with Section 30-4-80 of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Members of the public who wish to attend may do so at: <https://lir.sc.gov/env/videos.aspx>

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: To approve the agenda of the July 25, 2024, meeting.
Butz/Matthews/approved.

Approval of Excused Absences

MOTION: To excuse the absence of Mark Forester.
Butz/Matthews/approved.

Introduction of Committee Members and Others

Committee members and staff were introduced.

Committee Chairperson's Remarks – Phillip Thompson-King, Committee Chair

Chair Thompson-King stated that the purpose of the meeting is to find a solution to the low passing rate in South Carolina. He stated his belief that everyone shares the same stresses regarding passing rates, and due to the high importance of the committee's work with regards to public health he thanked everyone for their time and their commitment to this endeavor.

Board Executive's Remarks

Mr. Rose emphasized due diligence in vetting new examinations, and gave housekeeping notes, including instructions for WebEx participants and how to address questions during the meeting.

New Business

Water Professionals International (WPI) Update – Tom Healy, VP at WPI

Mr. Healy provided an update on the exam development process, mentioning the final exam development meeting held in Des Moines, Iowa, with subject matter experts, psychometricians, and exam developers. He explained the reduction of complexity levels in exam items, highlighting changes to the need-to-know criteria and study materials, both of which have been simplified significantly.

Lowering of Exam Cut Scores Update – Johnnie Rose and Tom Healy, VP at WPI

The committee discussed regarding the process of lowering the exam pass rate from 70% to 60%, and the potential impact on reciprocity with other states.

Mr. Healy discussed how lowering cut scores or using customized exams could affect reciprocity, as other states may not accept licenses from candidates who did not meet their own 70% threshold.

Exam Pass/Fail Reports – Johnnie Rose

Mr. Rose presented pass/fail reports from 2006-2024.

Committee Member Recommendations

Committee Chair Thompson-King suggested new members to be added to the committee, including Marcus Fritz, 'Alex from Laurens County', and retired member Susan Featherstone.

Review of Exam Content Findings

Mr. Rose requested key concerns from the committee members present:

The committee members shared concerns about the appropriateness of the level of difficulty for the exam questions, the presentation and framing of questions, insufficient time for review, "best" answer questions with multiple correct answers, use of non-standard terminology, questions not aligned with available references, and needs-to-know-criteria being far too broad.

The committee discussed next steps, including the process for reviewing the new exams once available and determining if further action is needed.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 12:30.
Matthews/Butz/approved.