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The need to include ethics content in professional licensure exams in the US (and worldwide)

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The National Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG) plays an essential role in supporting the licensing of applied geoscientists in more than 30 states in the United States [1] through promulgating model law, rules, and regulations for professional licensure, [2] by developing and implementing the Fundamentals of Geology (FG) and Practice of Geology (PG) exams, and [3] by providing related educational materials. The content of the FG and PG exams is driven substantially by the results of Task Analysis Surveys (TAS) taken by practicing geologists and academic geologists. Before 2023, the exams included content related to ethics reflected in the earlier TAS analytical summaries; however, ethics content is not included in the 2023 TAS or, reportedly, in the current FG or PG exams.

ASBOG has a history of including applied ethics in its products and organizational structure. There is a "Code of Conduct/Harassment Policy and Performance Guidelines" for the ASBOG organization on its website (ASBOG.org). The "Professional Geologist Model Licensure Law" states that each applicant must "submit a signed statement that the applicant has read and shall adhere to any code of professional conduct/ethics and rules established by the Board..." and that the application "be signed and sworn to by the applicant before a notary public" (ASBOG 2017, lines 844-847). Its "Model Rules and Regulations" includes a sample "Code of Ethics" for licensed professional geologists (ASBOG 2019, p. 27-29).

Geoscience professional organizations in the US and internationally affirm the fundamental importance of ethics in academic and applied geoscience. Virtually all professional organizations relevant to applied-geoscience practice in the United States (*e.g.*, AAPG, AGI, AGU, AIPG, AEG, ASBOG, GSA, SIPES...) have some form of ethics code that their members are obligated to know and adhere to. The International Association for the Promotion of Geoethics (IAPG -- www.geoethics.org) curates a list of codes of ethics/professional practice and provides publications and educational opportunities supporting geoethics. Another essential resource is the "Teaching Geoethics" website (serc.carleton.edu/geoethics -- Mogk and Bruckner, 2014-23).

Robert Tepel (1995) described the essential connection between licensure laws and professional ethics. To the extent that there is a lack of ethics content in the current 2023 TAS, candidate handbook, exam preparation resources, and FG and PG exams, ASBOG sends a message that applied ethics might not be a core competency for licensed geoscientists -- a message for which there is essentially no support among geoscience professional organizations.

I suggest that ASBOG collaborate with IAPG and other relevant organizations to address the problems or concerns that resulted in the reported elimination/reduction of ethics content in the

application, preparation, and implementation of its FG and PG exams. Licensed professional geoscientists must continue to understand that geoethics is foundational for their work within society. For references and resources, visit CroninProjects.org/EGU-Geoethics2024/.