

1 ENGROSSED HOUSE  
2 BILL NO. 1817

By: Worthen and Newton of the  
House

3 and

4 Pederson of the Senate

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6  
7 [ waters and water rights - legislative findings -  
8 Oklahoma Water Resources Board Well Driller and  
9 Pump Installer Program - duties - requirements for  
10 training program - Oklahoma Water Resources Board -  
11 institute of higher education - criteria - rules -  
12 Oklahoma Water Resources Board Well Driller and  
13 Pump Installer Program Revolving Fund -  
14 expenditures - noncodification - codification -  
15 effective date ]

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18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

19 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be  
20 codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

21 The Legislature finds that Oklahoma's groundwater resources face  
22 critical threats from depletion and contamination due to unqualified  
23 workers and improper water access practices. There is a nationwide  
24 geoscience workforce shortage projected by the United States

1 Department of Labor to peak at 130,000 workers by 2029, leaving  
2 Oklahoma's groundwater industry struggling to fill positions with  
3 adequately trained professionals. The growing reliance on untrained  
4 workers in the groundwater industry jeopardizes the safety of homes,  
5 businesses, and communities and accelerates the degradation of these  
6 essential water resources. Immediate action is needed to protect  
7 these vital water resources and to equip the groundwater workforce  
8 with the skills necessary to ensure sustainable water management  
9 practices.

10 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
11 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1020.16a of Title 82, unless  
12 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

13 A. There is hereby created the Oklahoma Water Resources Board  
14 Well Driller and Pump Installer Program. The Program shall be  
15 administered by the Board who shall have the following duties:

16 1. License well drilling and pump installation professionals to  
17 ensure the integrity of well construction, and ensure those  
18 professionals are meeting construction standards to prevent  
19 pollution of groundwater in Oklahoma;

20 2. Develop comprehensive standards and rules in cooperation  
21 with the Well Driller and Pump Installer Advisory Council, the  
22 Oklahoma Ground Water Association, and public stakeholders;

23 3. Provide for training and outreach for licensed well drillers  
24 and pump installers;

1       4. Provide technical assistance to the public regarding  
2 groundwater and well construction; and

3       5. Focus on funding and supporting the development and  
4 expansion of a groundwater professional training program at an  
5 accredited Tier 1 research institution of higher education in  
6 Oklahoma.

7           B. The groundwater professional training program shall:

8       1. Support and expand an existing groundwater professional  
9 training program established by the National Ground Water  
10 Association;

11       2. Provide specialized education and skills-based micro-  
12 credentials for both current and future groundwater professionals,  
13 including water well drillers, pump installers, plumbers, and heavy  
14 equipment operators; and

15       3. Partner with state and national industry leaders to ensure  
16 workforce training is conducted using cutting-edge, industry-  
17 approved methods.

18           C. The Board shall:

19       1. Identify and establish a formal partnership with a  
20 qualifying institution of higher education in Oklahoma;

21       2. Provide funding for the program from the Oklahoma Water  
22 Resources Board Well Driller and Pump Installer Program Revolving  
23 Fund established in Section 3 of this act;

- 1       3. Provide technical assistance and other support to the  
2 institution to enhance the training program;
- 3       4. Work with industry stakeholders to ensure alignment of the  
4 program with current and future workforce demands;
- 5       5. Oversee the implementation, evaluation, and continuous  
6 improvement of the Program; and
- 7       6. Report annually to the Governor and the Legislature on the  
8 Program's progress and outcomes.

9       D. To implement the Program, the Board shall partner with and  
10 provide funding for the Program to an accredited institution of  
11 higher education in this state that is:

12       1. A Tier 1 research institution of higher education in  
13 Oklahoma to ensure access to specialized subject matter experts in  
14 groundwater, as well as access to advanced research facilities and  
15 modern approaches to solving real-world problems in groundwater  
16 aquifer access. The institution shall have active community  
17 engagement and outreach to ensure both school-aged children and  
18 public populations are made aware of the critical occupations  
19 needed;

20       2. An institution that has an existing memoranda of  
21 understanding with state groundwater industry partners to ensure  
22 programming is created with industry-approved skills and outcomes;

23       3. An institution that has existing or in-planning  
24 opportunities for both university students and nonstudent

1 populations to earn micro-credentials to showcase their achievement  
2 of industry-aligned skills;

3       4. An institution with a demonstrated history of developing  
4 groundwater workforce professionals and expertise necessary to  
5 produce high-quality training in groundwater and water quality  
6 subject areas;

7       5. Capable of providing training that has been created by  
8 individuals specializing in best practices in both online and in-  
9 person education for working professionals and have assessments for  
10 both program effectiveness and participant satisfaction; and

11       6. Capable of providing training that is flexible to meet the  
12 needs of the current and future workforce.

13       E. The Board is authorized to promulgate rules to effectuate  
14 the provisions of this section.

15       SECTION 3.       NEW LAW       A new section of law to be codified  
16 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1020.16b of Title 82, unless  
17 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

18       There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund  
19 for the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to be designated the  
20 "Oklahoma Water Resources Board Well Driller and Pump Installer  
21 Program Revolving Fund". The fund shall be a continuing fund, not  
22 subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall consist of all monies  
23 deposited to the credit of the fund by law. All monies accruing to  
24 the credit of the fund are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted

1 and expended by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board for the purpose  
2 of administering the Oklahoma Water Resources Board Well Driller and  
3 Pump Installer Program established in Section 2 of this act.  
4 Expenditures from the fund shall be made upon warrants issued by the  
5 State Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by law with the  
6 Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for  
7 approval and payment.

8 SECTION 4. This act shall become effective November 1, 2025.

9 Passed the House of Representatives the 12th day of March, 2025.

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11 \_\_\_\_\_  
12 Presiding Officer of the House  
of Representatives

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14 Passed the Senate the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

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16 Presiding Officer of the Senate

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