

October 30, 2012

CalGeo's 2012 Legislative Accomplishments

By Rick Keene

CalGeo Legislative Advocate

As promised, here is a quick recap of just a few of the most important bills CalGeo was involved in this Legislative session. Please see our website for the entire list of bills we were engaged in on your behalf this year by clicking [here](#).

SB 863: Workers' Comp Reform - CalGeo was heavily involved in securing passage of this bill, which reforms the California Workers' Compensation System to provide employers increased control and reduce unnecessary costs. The bill was signed into law by Governor Brown, and is conservatively expected to generate a savings of more than \$1 billion to employers during the first year and up to \$400 million in following years. This is on top of a recently announced seven percent decrease in State Compensation Insurance Fund renewal premiums.

SB 1061: Practice Act - CalGeo helped to successfully kill this bill that sought to raise other engineering disciplines (other than Civil, Electrical and Mechanical) to practice act status and open up engineering practice authorization to anyone deemed "competent." CalGeo worked with ACEC to actively oppose this bill, leading to the author pulling the bill from committee consideration.

Click [here](#) to read more.

IN THIS ISSUE

[CalGeo Accomplishments](#) »

[Member News](#) »

[Landslide of the Month](#) »

[Counsel's Corner](#) »

[Job Board](#) »

[Safety First](#) »

Member News

Condor Earth Technologies Shares Insights with Peers

Condor Earth Technologies, Inc. recently delivered three presentations during Northern California's Storm Water Awareness Week - a series of free discussions on stormwater BMPs hosted in the field by industry experts. Click [here](#) to view its presentations on stormwater permits and collecting stormwater samples.

Condor Earth Technologies will also be hosting a discussion on codes and standards as part of Central Valley Chemical Safety Day on November 1 at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds. Click [here](#) for more info.

[Questions-Comments-Feedback](#)

[TOP](#)

Landslide of the Month

10,000 Cubic-yard Landslide Engulfs School Building in China

By Rex Upp



A small village in China's Yunnan Province has been the recent site of two deadly geotechnical disasters. A 5.6 earthquake shook the region in September, taking 81 lives amid a sea of crumbled buildings and infrastructure. A month later, sustained rains caused a hillside in the Province's Longhaiziang Township to slip, creating a massive landslide that tragically buried 19 elementary students. The children were in school during a national holiday making up for time lost due to the earthquake when the landslide hit. The slide was so large that it blocked a nearby river forming a lake 50 feet wide by 20 feet deep.

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[TOP](#)

Counsel's Corner

Supreme Court Forces Unilaterally Drafted Arbitration Clause

By Thomas R. Gill

Manning & Kass, Ellrod, Ramirez, Trester, LLP

In August of this year in a multi-divided opinion, our California Supreme Court held that a condominium developer can unilaterally enforce binding arbitration of construction disputes with homeowners by simply including an arbitration requirement in the CC&R's. In its written opinion, the court held that neither the homeowners association nor the individual homeowners were required to agree to arbitration. This will result in many more construction defect disputes being arbitrated rather than being decided by a jury. To read more, click [here](#).

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[TOP](#)

Job Board

[Visit our website](#) for the latest information on current available positions throughout the industry.

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Safety First

Personal Protective Equipment - Dressed For Protection

Courtesy of State Compensation Fund of California

One way to prevent injury at work is to wear proper personal protective gear. Some protective equipment is necessary for specific jobs, while other items are necessary for any work. Employers should know the hazards their workers face on the job, then provide the proper equipment to protect against those hazards. It's important that workers be trained on how to use and care for the equipment so it will provide maximum protection.

Hard hats should be worn by all workers where there is a danger of flying, falling, and moving objects. Hard hats can mean the difference between life and death. A bolt, rivet or tool dropped through a floor



opening can hit a worker below with great force and cause serious injury.

Safety boots with metal toe-caps protect the feet of the worker who handles heavy loads or who works around moving equipment. Rubber boots with hard toes and puncture-proof inner soles protect the feet and legs of those who work with wet concrete. Kneepads protect cement finishers and others who work on their knees for long periods.

Eyes can be damaged from chemical splashes, dust or flying particles. Protect eyes by wearing approved goggles or face shields. A pair of eyes are not for gambling. Wear eye protection when working around chemicals, while cutting material, when using power equipment and when spraying or sanding.

For some jobs, respirators are necessary to prevent noise and throat irritation or to prevent ingesting dangerous chemicals or vapors. The type of respirator to use depends on the nature of the work. Respirators should be worn when there will be a lot of dust, vapors or gases emitted into the air.

Even if the job will only take a few minutes, that's all it would take for a chemical or fragment to fly into an unprotected eye or a heavy object to fall on an unprotected head or foot. Wearing appropriate personal protective gear will greatly lessen a worker's chance of injury on the job.

State Compensation Fund of California Contact



In an ongoing effort to promote jobsite safety throughout California, CalGeo has partnered with the State Compensation Insurance Fund on the *Safety First!* program to provide our members and group participants with workers compensation insurance cost savings and

provide relevant information regarding safety issues. CalGeo members interested in becoming a member of CalGeo's "Safety First!" group can contact Patty Amaya at (323) 327-5773 or pattyamaya@scif.com. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Cal/OSHA Consultation



If you are an employer who wishes to obtain FREE assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation, or want to learn more about what services are available, you can do so by calling the toll-free assistance number, 1(800) 963-9424. If you want to arrange an on-site visit or obtain technical information, you can contact the Cal/OSHA Consultation area

office nearest your workplace by clicking [here](#), or you can email them at InfoCons@dir.ca.gov.

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