

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2435 (Chen) – As Amended April 15, 2026

Policy Committee: Business and Professions Vote: 18 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill creates a tiered penalty structure for persons convicted of practicing unlicensed land surveying.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Specifies the following penalties for a person found guilty of a misdemeanor for the unlicensed practice of land surveying:
 - a) A fine not exceeding \$10,000 or up to six months in county jail, or both, for a first conviction.
 - b) A fine not exceeding \$15,000 or up to six months in county jail, or both, for a second conviction.
 - c) A fine not less than \$20,000 or up to six months in county jail, or both, for a third or subsequent conviction.

FISCAL EFFECT:

The Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists (Board), within the Department of Consumer Affairs, anticipates no costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is co-sponsored by the California & Nevada Civil Engineers and Land Surveyors Association, the California Land Surveyors Association, and the American Council of Engineering Companies of California. According to the author:

Unlicensed land surveying threatens the safety of consumers and the public. By creating a new penalty structure for unlicensed practices, this bill promotes professional accountability, helps consumers better understand the risks associated with unlicensed land surveying services, and appropriately dissuades bad actors.

- 2) **Background.** Existing law, the Professional Land Surveyors' Act, provides for the licensure and regulation of land surveyors by the Board. The act prohibits a person from practicing land surveying unless appropriately licensed or specifically exempted from licensure. Under

the act, a person who practices, or offers to practice, land surveying without applicable legal authorization is guilty of a misdemeanor.

In 2019, the Board reported a spike in unlicensed activity, largely stemming from the advancement and availability of technologies, such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), used to render land surveying and geophysical services. At the time, the Board reported concerns that unlicensed individuals were interpreting resulting data and making subsequent recommendations, which constitutes the practice of land surveying and geophysics in California.

As a result of discussions throughout the board's 2024 sunset review process, AB 3253 (Berman), Chapter 588, Statutes of 2024, among other items, expanded the Board's authority to take enforcement action against certain unlicensed activities. However, the Board reports it continues to receive complaints about unlicensed activity and finds meaningful enforcement against unlicensed activity difficult.

Last year, the sponsors of this bill put forward AB 1341 (Hoover) to deter unlicensed land surveying and civil engineering activity. AB 1341 would have authorized the Contractors State License Board to discipline licensees for willful violation of engineering, land surveying, or architecture licensing requirements. AB 1341 was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee's suspense file. This bill provides an alternative approach to deterring unlicensed land surveying activity by imposing a tiered system of penalties for misdemeanor convictions.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1933 (Hoover), of this legislative session, requires a county surveyor to return a record of survey to the respective licensed land surveyor or civil engineer that submitted it, and revises requirements related to a county surveyor's examination of a submitted record of survey. AB 1933 is pending on the Assembly Floor.

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