

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General  
Government

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BILL: SB 320

INTRODUCER: Senator Gaetz

SUBJECT: Licensure Requirements for Surveyors and Mappers

DATE: April 9, 2025

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Renner</u>	<u>McKay</u>	<u>CM</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	<u>Wiseheart</u>	<u>Betta</u>	<u>AEG</u>	<u>Pre-meeting</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>RC</u>	_____

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**I. Summary:**

SB 320 requires the Board of Professional Surveyors and Mappers (board) within the Department of Agriculture and Consumers Services (DACS) to establish and administer the First Step Florida Surveyors and Mappers Credentialing and Licensing Protocol as an alternative pathway to temporary licensure beginning January 30, 2026.

Under the protocol, a person who does not meet current existing education requirements to become a surveyor or mapper may take the licensure examination to practice as a surveyor or mapper, so long as the applicant has paid the required fees, and provides a letter of recommendation from a current or prospective employer that is a licensed land surveyor or mapper.

The temporary licensure expires on December 15, 2031, after which all persons who apply for the licensure must meet the education requirements and be licensed as a condition for continuing to practice as a surveyor and mapper.

The bill may have a positive fiscal impact on state revenues to the extent that individuals take the licensure examination and pay the required fees. The bill is not expected to have an impact on local government revenues or expenditures. See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

## II. Present Situation:

### Land Surveying and Mapping

Chapter 472, F.S., governs the practice of land surveying and mapping in Florida. The Commissioner of the DACS<sup>1</sup> appoints the nine board members, subject to confirmation by the Florida Senate.<sup>2</sup> The DACS approves registrations, certificates, and licenses to those persons and businesses that meet all statutory and administrative requirements for licensure.<sup>3</sup> The board is authorized to adopt administrative rules to implement the act, subject to the prior approval of the DACS.<sup>4</sup>

Licensed professional surveyors and mappers determine and display the facts of size, shape, topography, tidal datum planes, legal or geodetic location or relation, and orientation of improved or unimproved real property through direct measurement or from certifiable measurement through accepted photogrammetric procedures.<sup>5</sup> Currently, there are 2,517 licensed surveyors and mappers in Florida.<sup>6</sup>

### Licensing Examinations and Licensure

The board must approve all applicants for licensure to be eligible to take the licensure examination.<sup>7</sup> An applicant must be of good moral character<sup>8</sup> and satisfy the following educational and experience requirements to be eligible to take the licensure examination:

- A bachelor's degree in surveying and mapping or in a similarly titled program, with *four* or more years of work experience under a professional surveyor, with the applicant having been in responsible charge of the accuracy and correctness of the surveying work performed; or
- A bachelor's degree in a course of study *other than* surveying and mapping, with six or more years of work experience under a professional surveyor, and for five of those years, the applicant must have been in responsible charge of the accuracy and correctness of the surveying work performed.<sup>9</sup>

Applicants whose course of study was other than surveying and mapping must meet an additional educational requirement of a minimum of 25 semester hours from a college or university approved by the board in surveying and mapping subjects, or in any combination of courses in civil engineering, surveying, mapping, mathematics, photogrammetry, forestry, or land law and the physical sciences.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The regulation of professional surveyors and mappers was transferred in 2009 from the Department of Business and Professional Regulation to DACS. See Ch. 2009-66, ss. 1-30, Laws of Fla. (effective October 1, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Section 472.007, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Sections 472.006(10) and 472.015, F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 472.008, and Fla. Admin. Code R. 5J-17.001 to 17.210

<sup>5</sup> Section 472.005(3), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Phone call with DACS (Feb. 7, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> Section 472.013, F.S.

<sup>8</sup> The term "good moral character means "a personal history of honesty, fairness, and respect for the rights of others and for the laws of this state and nation." See s. 472.013(5)(a), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 472.013(2), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 472.013(2)(b), F.S.

The board, by rule, is authorized to establish examination fees.<sup>11</sup> The initial application and examination fee must not exceed \$125 plus the actual per-applicant cost to the DACS to purchase the examination from the National Council of Engineering Examiners or a similar national organization.<sup>12</sup> The examination fee must be sufficient to cover the cost of obtaining and administering the examination and is refundable if the applicant is found ineligible to sit for the examination; the application fee is nonrefundable.<sup>13</sup>

Upon receipt of the \$125 license fee, the DACS must issue a license, with certain exceptions,<sup>14</sup> to a person certified by the board as having met applicable requirements. However, an applicant who is not otherwise qualified for licensure is not entitled to licensure solely based on a passing score on the required examination.<sup>15</sup>

### Trends

According to the U.S. Bureau of Statistics (Bureau), in 2024, there were 48,000 working surveyors in the U.S., 16,000 were under the age of 35, and 10,000 were over the age of 55.<sup>16</sup> About 45% of surveyors and mappers in Florida are 60 or younger, while 55% are 61 or older.<sup>17</sup> The Bureau estimates about 7,600 openings for surveyors and mappers are projected each year over the next decade and that many of the openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who may transfer to different occupations or who retire.<sup>18</sup>

The most common degree for surveyors and mappers is a bachelor's degree, with 43% of surveyors earning that degree. The second most common degree is an associate degree at 24%.<sup>19</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

**Section 1** amends s. 472.013, F.S., to require the board to establish and administer the First Step Florida Surveyors and Mappers Credentialing and Licensing Protocol as an alternative pathway to temporary licensure. Beginning January 30, 2026, a person who wants to be a licensed surveyor and mapper but *does not* meet the necessary education and work requirements may take the licensure examination to practice as a surveyor and mapper in Florida if the person is of good moral character and the following criteria are met:

- The applicant has paid the \$125 examination fee; and

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<sup>11</sup> See s. 472.011, F.S. and Fla. Admin. Code R. 5J-17.070.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> See s. 472.015(6), F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 472.015(3)(a), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*, 2024, available at <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11b.htm> (last visited Feb. 17, 2025).

<sup>17</sup> Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, *Board of Professional Surveyors and Mappers Newsletter*, Fall 2024, p. 9, available at <https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/117575/file/BPSM-Fall-2024-Newsletter.pdf> (last visited Feb. 17, 2025).

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook for Surveying and Mapping Technicians*, available at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/architecture-and-engineering/surveying-and-mapping-technicians.htm#tab-6> (last visited Feb. 17, 2025).

<sup>19</sup> Zippia, *Land Surveyor Education Requirements*, Jan. 8, 2025, available at <https://www.zippia.com/land-surveyor-jobs/education/> (last visited Feb. 17, 2025).

- The applicant provides a letter of recommendation to the department from his or her employer or a prospective employer who is a licensed land surveyor or mapper.

The temporary licensure expires on December 15, 2031, and the department must notify all who apply for such licensure of the expiration date. The applicants must meet the education and work requirements and be licensed as a condition of continuing to practice as a surveyor and mapper after the expiration date.

This provision is exempt from the prohibition on licensure based solely on a passing exam score provided in s. 472.015(3)(a), F.S.

**Section 2** reenacts s. 472.015(4), F.S., to incorporate the amendments made to s. 472.013, F.S., in section 1 of the bill.

**Section 3** provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

##### A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

##### B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

##### C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

##### D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

##### E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

#### **V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

##### A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

##### B. Private Sector Impact:

The bill creates an alternative pathway to temporary licensure as a substitute for the degree requirements which may allow more people to practice as a surveyor and mapper.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

The bill may have a positive fiscal impact on state revenues to the extent that individuals take the licensure examination and pay the required fees. The potential increased workload could require the addition of one Regulatory Consultant position needed to maintain statutorily required application processing deadlines. Currently, the program only has one FTE employee processing applications.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 472.013 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill reenacts section 472.015 of the Florida Statutes to incorporate the amendment made to s. 472.013, F.S.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

**B. Amendments:**

None.