

Soil Conservation District Law Changes Made by Draft Legislation

- Eliminates reference to the “state soil conservation commission” and establishes the non-regulatory “office of soil and water conservation” in the office of the Governor. (§22-2718)
 - The “office” consists of 5 board members appointed by the Governor;
 - Eliminates reference to political party representation;
 - Governor is required to consider geographic representation;
 - Districts may submit a list of up to 3 names for board vacancies that the Governor may consider;
 - Allows the “office” to invite a representative from a district or districts, as well as any other person or entity the “office” deems appropriate, to serve as nonvoting advisory members;
 - The Governor appoints an administrator of the “office” from a list of persons recommended by the “office;” and
 - Requires the “office” to report annually to the Senate and House Agricultural Affairs committees.

- Eliminates reference to the “Idaho association of soil conservation districts.”

- Requires districts provide for independent financial audits in accordance with Section 67-450B, Idaho Code. (§22-2721(11))

- Allocation of Funds to Districts (§22-2727)
 - Increases the base funding from \$5,000 to \$8,500;
 - Requires calculation of local match to be based on the previous fiscal year; and
 - Limits allocation to \$50,000 to any one district in a fiscal year.

- Specifies that RCRDP and WQPA applications are to be filed with the “office,” which, in consultation with the districts, reviews and evaluates the proposed improvement, project or plan. RCRDP applications must be accompanied by a conservation plan approved by the local district. (§§22-2732 through 22-2734)

- Designates the Department of Agriculture as the appropriate state agency for agricultural activities and/or technical advice in state delisting management plans (§36-2404); water quality (§39-3602); Clean Lakes Act (§39-6407); Big Payette Lake Act (§39-6609); and with regard to threatened and endangered species (§67-818).