

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

TECHNICAL UPDATES TO SWCD LAW, MINNESOTA STATUTES CHAPTER 103C: SF1733 Ruud / HF1706 Lippert

About Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs):

Minnesota SWCDs are special-purpose units of government established under state law to carry out conservation programs at the local level. The districts work with landowners to provide technical expertise and financial assistance to landowners to maintain and improve the quality, quantity, distribution and sustainability of natural resources including surface water, groundwater, soil, and ecological resources. Each SWCD has a five-member, locally elected Board of Supervisors to set policies, provide local input, and ensure oversight and accountability for the district.

Technical Updates to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103C, SWCD Law

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103C, is the SWCD Law. However, duties and obligations for SWCDs are also in various other areas of state statute.

Providing those statutory cross references in 103C, and incorporating simple text on the range of SWCD services, would help better articulate what SWCDs do, how they do it, and the legal obligations the state has put upon them.

These proposed changes do not add or replace existing SWCD obligations and authorities. They are meant to clarify existing requirements of SWCDs and what they do to deliver on those requirements. It should be noted, the proposed language is still not necessarily all-encompassing of the work SWCDs do, such as implementation of various state programs and project grants that are authorized through appropriations, session law.



The bill proposes adding a section to 103C:

[103C.332] SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS; DUTIES AND SERVICES.

- **Subdivision 1. Duties.** Brings in the cross-references to other areas of statute, and adds language about our work with our partners at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- **Subdivision 2. Services.** Lays out the work SWCDs do to fulfill their statutory obligations as well as expectations of the constituents they serve.



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Technical Updates to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103C, SWCD Law

[103C.332] SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS; DUTIES AND SERVICES.

Subdivision 1. Duties. Brings in the cross-references to other areas of statute, and adds language about our work with our partners at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

- Soil Erosion and Riparian Protection, 103F.401 to 103F.48;
- Wetland Conservation Act, technical evaluation panel member, and advisor or designated local government unit, 103G.2242, 103G.221 to 103G.2375;
- Reinvest in Minnesota reserve program, local administrator, 103F.515;
- Local water management program, as advisory or designated local government unit, 103B;
- Comprehensive watershed management planning, 103B.801;
- Disaster response and recovery efforts, 12A;
- DNR general permit recommendations, 103G.301;
- Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, local administrator, 17.9891 to 17.993;
- Agricultural land preservation program, chapter 40A;
- Deadlines for agency action, 15.99;
- Coordination with appropriate county officials on matters related to electing soil and water conservation district supervisors;
- Cooperation with federal, state, and local agencies and with private organizations to avoid duplicating and to enhance implementing public and private conservation initiatives within the jurisdiction of the district; and
- Cooperative agreements with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other USDA agencies to leverage federal technical and financial assistance.

Subdivision 2. Services. Lays out the work SWCDs do to fulfill their statutory obligations.

- performing administrative services
- providing technical expertise
- providing information and education outreach
- facilitating regulatory processes for impacted landowners
- administering projects and programs
- monitoring and inventorying
- maintaining a modern technology infrastructure

