

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

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**Subject:** Watershed Management

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### Overview

This bill provides additional direction and authority to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for purposes of comprehensive watershed management planning (often referred to as the “One Watershed, One Plan” approach).

#### Section

- 1 **Soil and water conservation policy.** Amends § 103A.206. Adds the term “soil health” to the state’s soil and water conservation policy (the term is defined in section 4 of the bill).
- 2 **Water quality practices; standardized specifications.** Adds § 103B.101, subd. 16. Requires BWSR to work with various stakeholders to “foster mutual understanding and provide recommendations” on water quality and soil conservation protection and improvement practices/projects. Allows the board to convene working groups or teams for these purposes.
- 3 **Comprehensive watershed management planning program.** Adds § 103B.801.
  - Subd. 1. Definitions.** States that certain definitions pertaining to comprehensive local water management apply to this section.
  - Subd. 2. Program purposes.** Identifies purposes for the comprehensive watershed management plan program.
  - Subd. 3. Coordination.** Requires BWSR to develop policies for coordination and development of comprehensive watershed management plans and specifies the minimum requirements for the policies.

## Section

**Subd. 4. Plan content.** Requires BWSR to develop content requirements for comprehensive watershed management plans and specifies minimum requirements for the plans.

**Subd. 5. Timelines; administration.** Requires BWSR, by June 30, 2016, to adopt a plan to transition to comprehensive watershed management plans by 2025.

**Subd. 6. Authority.** States that existing authorities of BWSR are retained when a comprehensive watershed management plan is adopted as a substitute for another type of plan.

- 4 **Soil health.** Adds § 103C.101, subd. 10a. Defines “soil health” as the “continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living system that sustains plants, animals and humans” and identifies indicators of soil health.
- 5 **Powers and duties.** Adds § 103C.401, subd. 1. Adds to the duties of BWSR the requirement to develop and implement a state-led technical training and certification program.
- 6 **Contracts by district.** Amends § 103C.501, subd. 5. Allows soil and water conservation districts, with BWSR approval, to provide financial assistance (cost-share) to land occupiers for nonstructural land management practices that are part of a planned erosion control and water quality improvement plan.