

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	7 - 0 - 1
Yeas:	Beyer, Gilliam, Krieger, Schaufler, VanOrman, Wingard, Clem
Nays:	0
Exc.:	Roblan
Prepared By:	Mary Gibson and Cheyenne Ross, Administrators
Meeting Dates:	2/19, 3/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Updates and clarifies Soil and Water Conservation Districts' authorizing statutes to reflect current practice and contemporary conditions and concerns. Eliminates requirement for public election if no contest exists. Updates and clarifies relationship between Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Oregon Department of Agriculture to reflect a partnership, the provision of technical assistance, and oversight for important or historically appropriate issues. Addresses problems with consolidation and merger of special districts that occur when local property tax levies exist for local conservation purposes.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Statutes need to reflect voluntary aspect of conservation districts, renewable energy, existence of metropolitan/urban districts
- Measure touches on a number of topics including contracting, tax levies, liens
- One-on-one time requested with representatives of the Association of Conservation Districts and the Oregon Department of Agriculture to discuss at greater length prior to further discussion

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: The -2 amendments add "natural resource organizations" to the policy statement; allow "electors" to attend hearings and file petitions; require public notice, and eliminate some referendum requirements and election costs for district formation unless requested; simplify processes for landowner inclusion and withdrawal; clarify process of consolidation and provide for dissolution; remove unused language and conform language for consistency with other statutory sections that govern election law and special district law.

BACKGROUND: The authorizing statutes for soil and water conservation districts' (SWCDs) have not been updated for some time. As a result, the statutes do not reflect actual practice, modern conservation issues, or current economic conditions. House Bill 2082 A eliminates authority no longer exercised by SWCDs, streamlines their current relationship with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) so as not to overtax the agency with minor matters, and seeks to conserve costs by limiting unnecessary public elections.

3/27/2009 8:49:00 AM

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.