

SB 775 -3 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 5/23, 6/6

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Creates two categories and of soil and water conservation district zone directors, based on county population. Requires all zone directors to be registered voters. Zone directors in counties with population of less than _____ are required to own or manage 10 or more acres of land in district, be involved in active property management, and reside within district boundaries, or reside within represented zones, have at least one year's experience as director or associate director of district, and have conservation plan approved by district. Zone directors in counties with a population of ____ or more need only reside within district and be registered voters.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-3 Creates two categories of soil and water conservation district zone directors, based on county population. Specifies that all zone directors must be registered voters and reside in represented district. Zone directors in a district that does not include any county with a population of 250,000 or more must also own or manage 10 or more acres of land in represented zone and be involved in active land management, or have at least one year's experience as director or associate director of district.

BACKGROUND:

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are special districts founded in response to the Dust Bowl to promote and assist voluntary natural resource conservation. The Dust Bowl was a natural disaster in the 1930s that was partially caused by certain agricultural practices that affected soils, which caused erosion and dust storms that harmed soil and water quality. The dust storms also impacted the U.S. economy and food production system. [Current statute](#) states that Oregon's 45 SWCDs are founded to:

- conserve and develop natural resources;
- control and prevent soil erosion;
- control floods;
- conserve and develop water resources and water quality;
- prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs;
- assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors;
- preserve wildlife;
- conserve natural beauty;
- promote recreational development;
- promote collaborative conservation efforts to protect and enhance healthy watershed functions;
- assist in the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency resources;
- protect the tax base;
- protect public lands; and,
- protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of this state.

Each of Oregon's SWCDs are governed by a board of directors. The State Department of Agriculture provides for the zoning of each SWCD, and each zone has a director, which makes up the board of directors.

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