

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2348

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 23, 2000

Title: An act relating to conservation districts.

Brief Description: Authorizing treasurer services for conservation districts.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives G. Chandler and Linville; by request of Conservation Commission).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/16/2000, 2/23/2000 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Gardner, Honeyford, Morton, Prentice, Snyder, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The county treasurer invests the funds of any municipal corporation in the county upon the authorization of the municipal corporation's governing body. Some units of local government are expressly authorized to make the county treasurer the ex officio treasurer of the local government, and may also designate a different person to act as the treasurer for the local government.

Conservation districts are authorized to employ a secretary and other technical experts, but are not expressly authorized to hire someone to act as the treasurer for the district.

Summary of Bill: The county treasurer acts as the ex officio treasurer of the conservation district located in the county. The board of supervisors of a conservation district may designate a person other than the county treasurer to act as the treasurer of the district. The person designated as the treasurer of the conservation district must have experience in financial or fiscal matters.

If the board of supervisors designates a person to act as treasurer of the conservation district, the board must require a bond from a surety company to protect the district from loss. The district must pay the premium on the surety bond. The district must require a reasonable bond of any other person handling moneys or securities of the district, but the district must pay the premium.

If the county treasurer acts as the treasurer for the conservation district, the district funds must be deposited with the county depositaries under the same provisions that apply for

county depositories. If someone other than the county treasurer acts as the treasurer for the conservation district, all district funds must be deposited in a bank or banks authorized to do business in the state, as designated by the board of supervisors.

The treasurer must establish a conservation district fund into which all district funds are paid. The board of supervisors may create special funds for the placement of money as it directs. All conservation district funds must be paid to the treasurer and may be disbursed only upon warrants issued by an auditor appointed by the board of supervisors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Conservation districts have designated a person to serve as district treasurer for 50 years. However, the State Auditor's position is that the statutory authority to appoint a treasurer and auditor needs to be specifically expressed in statute.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Steve Meyers, Conservation Commission; Larry Cochran, WACO President; Don Stuart, WA Assn. of Conservation Districts.