

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5010

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, January 27, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to funding conservation districts.

**Brief Description:** Funding conservation districts.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rasmussen and Schoesler; by request of Conservation Commission.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/13/05, 1/27/05 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Delvin, Jacobsen, Morton, and Schoesler.

**Staff:** Bob Lee (786-7404)

**Background:** The Washington State Conservation Commission and local conservation districts administer a number of programs relating to the conservation of natural resources. The Conservation Commission receives state funds to pass through to local conservation districts. For the current biennium, \$1.2 million was appropriated for distribution to 48 conservation districts. Conservation districts may apply for grants from the Conservation Commission. Funds are distributed in accordance with an initial formula. Any funds remaining after the initial distribution are then distributed in accordance with a second formula.

**Summary of Bill:** The Conservation Commission is authorized to adopt rules pertaining to the eligibility and distribution of these funds. The initial and the second distribution formulas are repealed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** Historically, each conservation district has been given a set minimal amount of basic funding to keep their doors open. Some districts have developed significant funding sources while others remain underfunded. The goal of this bill is to come up with a new allocation formula so that all districts have a chance to be viable. For this purpose, the outgoing Governor's budget request proposes an additional appropriation of \$420,000 for

distribution to conservation districts and the additional appropriation is contingent upon the passage of this bill.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Mark Clark, Conservation Commission; John Larson and Jim Jesernig, Washington Association of Conservation Districts; and John Stuhlmiller, Washington Farm Bureau.