

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2348

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Ecology

Title: An act relating to conservation districts.

Brief Description: Authorizing treasurer services for conservation districts.

Sponsors: Representatives G. Chandler and Linville; by request of Conservation Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 1/27/00 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

Irrigation districts may authorize someone other than the county treasurer to act as treasurer for the district.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives G. Chandler, Republican Co-Chair; Linville, Democratic Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic Vice Chair; Koster, Republican Vice Chair; Anderson; B. Chandler; Delvin; Fortunato; Grant; Reardon; Schoesler; Stensen; Sump and Wood.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

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 Substitute 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 may 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 depositaries. 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.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

If an irrigation district designates a person to act as treasurer for the district, that person must be bonded. The original bill made the bonding provision permissive rather than mandatory.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The State Auditor's office recommended that the law be changed to reflect the current practice of some conservation districts. This law is very similar to a law applicable to public utility districts. Conservation districts already require the person acting as treasurer to be bonded.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Steve Meyer, Washington Conservation Commission; and Don Stuart, Washington Association of Conservation Districts.