

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6617

C 369 L 06

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding the contents of farm plans prepared by conservation districts.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen and Rasmussen).

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development
House Committee on Local Government

Background: Conservation districts are non-regulatory agencies that provide technical assistance to landowners and operators. Access to a number of conservation programs is made through conservation districts.

Many farm plans requested by landowners are made on a voluntary basis to improve the management of land and other natural resources. A recent demand for copies of all farm plans held by a conservation district have lead to concerns that public disclosure of farm plans will serve as a disincentive to landowners and operators from participating in voluntary conservation programs.

Summary: Before preparing a farm plan, the conservation district is to inform the landowner or operator in writing of the types of information that is subject to disclosure to the public. Before completion of the final draft of the farm plan, the district is to send the farm plan to the landowner or operator for verification of the information. The final farm plan must not be disclosed by the conservation district until the requesting owner or operator confirms the information in the farm plan and returns a signed copy to the conservation district.

Farm plans developed by conservation districts are not subject to public disclosure unless permission is granted by the landowner or operator that requested the plan or the farm plan is used for application or issuance of a permit. Farm plans developed solely under the state Clean Water Act are subject to the disclosure provisions contained in statutes enacted in 2005 which provide for creation of ranges to be used in reporting.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	46	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	43	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 7, 2006
July 1, 2006 (Section 2)