



Ohio Revised Code

Section 940.02 Ohio soil and water conservation commission; powers and duties.

Effective: January 1, 2016

Legislation: House Bill 64 - 131st General Assembly

There is hereby established in the department of agriculture the Ohio soil and water conservation commission. The commission shall consist of seven members of equal status and authority, six of whom shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate, and one of whom shall be designated by resolution of the board of directors of the Ohio federation of soil and water conservation districts. The directors of agriculture, environmental protection, and natural resources, the vice-president for agricultural administration of the Ohio state university, and an officer of the Ohio federation of soil and water conservation districts, or their designees, may serve as ex officio members of the commission, but without the power to vote. A vacancy in the office of an appointed member shall be filled by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed shall hold office for the remainder of that term. Of the appointed members, four shall be persons who have a knowledge of or interest in agricultural production and the natural resources of the state. One member shall represent rural interests and one member shall represent urban interests. Not more than three of the appointed members shall be members of the same political party.

Terms of office of the member designated by the board of directors of the federation and the members appointed by the governor shall be for four years, commencing on the first day of July and ending on the thirtieth day of June.

Each appointed member shall hold office from the date of appointment until the end of the term for which the member was appointed. Any appointed member shall continue in office subsequent to the expiration date of the member's term until the member's successor takes office, or until a period of sixty days has elapsed, whichever occurs first.

The commission shall organize by selecting from its members a chairperson and a vice-chairperson. The commission shall hold at least one regular meeting in each quarter of each calendar year and



shall keep a record of its proceedings, which shall be open to the public for inspection. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson and shall be called by the chairperson upon receipt of a written request signed by two or more members of the commission. Written notice of the time and place of each meeting shall be sent to each member of the commission. A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum.

The commission may adopt rules as necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter, subject to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

The governor may remove any appointed member of the commission at any time for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office, after giving to the member a copy of the charges against the member and an opportunity to be heard publicly in person or by counsel in the member's defense. Any such act of removal by the governor is final. A statement of the findings of the governor, the reason for the governor's action, and the answer, if any, of the member shall be filed by the governor with the secretary of state and shall be open to public inspection.

All members of the commission shall be reimbursed for the necessary expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members.

Upon recommendation by the commission, the director of agriculture shall designate an executive secretary and provide staff necessary to carry out the powers and duties of the commission.

The commission shall do all of the following:

(A) Determine distribution of funds under section 940.15 of the Revised Code, recommend to the director and other agencies the levels of appropriations to special funds established to assist soil and water conservation districts, and recommend the amount of federal funds to be requested and policies for the use of such funds in support of soil and water conservation district programs;

(B) Assist in keeping the supervisors of soil and water conservation districts informed of their powers and duties, program opportunities, and the activities and experience of all other districts, and facilitate the interchange of advice, experience, and cooperation between the districts;



(C) Seek the cooperation and assistance of the federal government or any of its agencies, and of agencies of this state, in the work of the districts;

(D) Adopt appropriate rules governing the conduct of elections provided for in this chapter, subject to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, provided that only owners and occupiers of lands situated within the boundaries of the districts or proposed districts to which the elections apply shall be eligible to vote in the elections;

(E) Recommend to the director priorities for planning and construction of small watershed projects, and make recommendations to the director concerning coordination of programs as proposed and implemented in agreements with soil and water conservation districts;

(F) Recommend to the director, the governor, and the general assembly programs and legislation with respect to the operations of soil and water conservation districts that will encourage proper soil, water, and other natural resource management and promote the economic and social development of the state;

(G) Recommend to the director of agriculture a procedure for coordination of a program of agricultural pollution abatement. Implementation of such a program shall be based on air and water quality standards adopted pursuant to sections 3704.03 and 6111.041 of the Revised Code, respectively. The director of agriculture, through the division of soil and water conservation, shall coordinate the efforts of state and local governmental agencies to meet the minimum state air and water quality standards relating to agricultural pollutants. The director of environmental protection shall utilize the division of soil and water conservation in the department of agriculture and soil and water conservation districts in encouraging landowner abatement of agricultural pollution.