

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2492 Session of
2008

INTRODUCED BY R. MILLER, ARGALL, BENNINGHOFF, BOYD, CAPPELLI,
EVERETT, GILLESPIE, GINGRICH, GRELL, HARPER, HERSHEY, HESS,
HUTCHINSON, M. KELLER, MELIO, MOYER, MUNDY, NICKOL, REICHLEY,
ROSS, RUBLEY, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, SONNEY, SWANGER AND HARHART,
MAY 2, 2008

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY,
MAY 2, 2008

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of May 15, 1945 (P.L.547, No.217), entitled, as
2 amended, "An act relating to the conservation of soil, water
3 and related natural resources and land use practices
4 contributing to soil wastage and soil erosion; providing for
5 the organization of the various counties into conservation
6 districts; the appointment of their officers and employes;
7 and prescribing their powers and duties; creating the State
8 Conservation Commission in the Department of Environmental
9 Resources and fixing its powers and duties relative to the
10 administration of this act; providing financial and legal
11 assistance to such conservation districts and the commission;
12 and authorizing county governing bodies to make
13 appropriations thereto; providing for disposition and
14 operation of existing districts; and repealing existing
15 laws," further providing for declaration of policy and for
16 powers of districts and directors; and providing for
17 interfund transfers.

18 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
19 hereby enacts as follows:

20 Section 1. Section 2 of the act of May 15, 1945 (P.L.547,
21 No.217), known as the Conservation District Law, reenacted and
22 amended December 19, 1984 (P.L.1125, No.221), is amended to
23 read:

1 Section 2. Declaration of Policy.--It is hereby declared to
2 be the policy of the Commonwealth [to]:

3 (1) To provide for the conservation of the soil, water and
4 related resources of this Commonwealth, and for the control and
5 prevention of soil erosion, and thereby to preserve natural
6 resources; assist in the control of floods; assist in developing
7 and implementing natural resource planning; prevent impairment
8 of dams and reservoirs; assist in maintaining the navigability
9 of rivers and harbors; preserve wildlife; preserve the tax base;
10 protect public lands; and protect and promote the health, safety
11 and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth.

12 (2) To designate conservation districts as the primary local
13 government unit responsible for the conservation of natural
14 resources in this Commonwealth and to be responsible for
15 implementing programs, projects, technical assistance and
16 activities to quantify, prevent and control non-point sources of
17 pollution.

18 (3) To authorize and encourage conservation districts to
19 work in close cooperation with the agricultural community to
20 deliver a system of technical assistance designed to assist with
21 conservation planning requirements and in the production of
22 biofuels feedstocks and appropriate energy efficiency
23 applications.

24 (4) To authorize and encourage conservation districts to
25 work in close cooperation with landowners and occupiers,
26 agencies of Federal and State government, other local and county
27 government units and other entities identified and approved by
28 the commission for the purposes of effectuating programs and
29 policies under this act.

30 Section 2. Section 9 of the act is amended by adding

1 paragraphs to read:

2 Section 9. Powers of Districts and Directors.--The directors
3 of a district shall have the following powers in addition to
4 those granted in other sections of this act:

5 * * *

6 (9.1) To work in close cooperation with the agricultural
7 community to deliver a system of technical assistance designed
8 to assist with conservation planning requirements, the
9 production of biofuels feedstocks, the appropriate application
10 of energy efficiency measures in farming operations and the
11 increased adoption of conservation tillage practices on
12 croplands.

13 (9.2) To engage in the development of energy efficiency and
14 energy resources which shall include, but not be limited to:
15 delivering technical assistance to producers to improve the
16 energy efficiency of farming operations, and to provide
17 technical assistance in the development and implementation of
18 best management practices related to cropping systems to be used
19 as feedstock for the production of biofuels.

20 (9.3) To develop and implement an electronic-based system of
21 providing technical assistance to the agricultural sector in
22 meeting Federal and State natural resources planning
23 requirements, including the development of appropriate training
24 programs and materials.

25 Section 3. The act is amended by adding a section to read:

26 Section 14.1. Interfund Transfers.--(a) For the fiscal year
27 beginning July 1, 2008, the Secretary of the Budget shall
28 transfer an amount equal to \$10,000,000 from the State Stores
29 Fund to the Conservation District Fund to implement the
30 activities specified in section 9(9.1), (9.2) and (9.3).

1 (b) The General Assembly may at any time transfer additional
2 amounts from any funds available to the Commonwealth pursuant to
3 an appropriation to the Conservation District Fund.

4 Section 4. This act shall take effect immediately.