

SESSION OF 2007

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2048

As Amended by Senate Committee on
Agriculture

Brief*

HB 2048 would amend a portion of law dealing with conservation districts to raise the limit of authorized state assistance from the current \$10,000 per district to a new maximum of \$25,000 per district. The bill also would make this limitation applicable to fiscal years 2008 and thereafter, and make it subject to appropriations.

Background

At the hearing on the bill in the House Committee, proponents included representatives of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts and the State Conservation Commission. Also appearing in support of the bill were the Finney County Conservation District Manager, the Franklin County Conservation District Manager, and the Director of the Kansas Water Office. Also speaking in support of the bill were individuals from Bourbon and Shawnee counties. Conferees explained that this was a proposal by the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts and that historically aid to conservation districts had come from the State General Fund, but that for some number of years the money had been coming from the State Water Plan Fund. The conferee from the Kansas Water Office, who was representing the Kansas Water Authority, told Committee members that it was the desire of the members of the Authority that funding for conservation districts be from the State General Fund, although that change in funding source was not reflected in the Governor's Budget.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

The conferees also explained that another reason for the desire to have enhanced funding for conservation districts was a result of the plan by the USDA Farm Service Agency to close 11 county offices in the state. Oftentimes, the conservation district offices are co-located with the USDA offices, and closures may impact the operations of the local conservation districts.

There were no opponents to the bill.

At the hearing before the Senate Committee, representatives of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts and the Kansas Water Office appeared as proponents. No one appeared as an opponent.

The Senate Committee on Agriculture amended the bill to provide that the increased limitation would be applicable for fiscal year 2008 and thereafter and be subject to appropriations.

According to the fiscal note on the bill, the State Conservation Commission indicates that increasing the cap from \$10,000 to \$25,000 would allow for increased state aid for some conservation districts that are able to increase local funding, because increased local funding would require a corresponding increase in state matching funds. The fiscal note states that the agency estimates that local funding increases would result in an increase of \$1,086,154 in state matching funds and that the program currently is financed through the State Water Plan Fund. Any expenditure increase resulting from the passage of this bill would be in addition to amounts recommended in *The FY 2008 Governor's Budget Report*.