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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FIRST SESSION

H. F. No. **4398**

03/11/2020 Authored by Brand, Lippert, Fischer and Considine
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division

- 1.1 A bill for an act
- 1.2 relating to waters; establishing a water quality and storage program; appropriating
- 1.3 money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103F.
- 1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:
- 1.5 Section 1. **[103F.05] WATER QUALITY AND STORAGE PROGRAM.**
- 1.6 Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section:
- 1.7 (1) "board" means the Board of Water and Soil Resources; and
- 1.8 (2) "local units of government" has the meaning given under section 103B.305,
- 1.9 subdivision 5.
- 1.10 Subd. 2. **Establishment; purpose.** The Board of Water and Soil Resources must establish
- 1.11 a grant program to provide financial assistance to local units of government and private
- 1.12 landowners to control water volume and rates for the purposes of protecting infrastructure
- 1.13 and improving water quality and related public benefits.
- 1.14 Subd. 3. **Grants.** The board must distribute money appropriated for the purposes of this
- 1.15 section equally to soil and water conservation districts. Soil and water conservation districts
- 1.16 must use the money for the purposes of this section and may use the money for:
- 1.17 (1) soil and water conservation district projects; and
- 1.18 (2) grants to local units of government and private landowners.
- 1.19 Subd. 4. **Grants; priority.** (a) Soil and water conservation districts must establish a
- 1.20 grant process for local units of government and private landowners to apply for money
- 1.21 received under this section. The process must include a grant application and scoring process

that is accessible to the general public and requires only a brief application for projects with a total cost under \$.....

(b) When scoring grants, a soil and water conservation district must give priority to projects that:

(1) are consistent with the purposes of the Forever Green agriculture initiative, including those that incorporate perennial and winter-annual crops into existing agricultural practices;

(2) convert agricultural lands prone to flooding to alternative uses that store or slow water; and

(3) have a nonstate match.

Subd. 5. **Technical assistance.** The board must provide assistance to soil and water conservation districts to implement this section, including providing guidance for establishing grant processes, providing technical assistance, and evaluating the effectiveness of completed projects constructed under the program.

Subd. 6. **Interstate cooperation.** The board may enter into or approve working agreements with neighboring states or their political subdivisions to accomplish projects consistent with the program established in this section.

Subd. 7. **Federal aid availability.** The board must regularly complete an analysis of the availability of federal funds and programs to supplement or complement efforts consistent with the purposes of this section and make the information available to soil and water conservation districts.

Subd. 8. **Report.** By January 15, 2023, and every two years thereafter, the board must evaluate the effectiveness of the program under this section and submit a report with the results and recommendations to the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources.

Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION.

\$..... in fiscal year 2021 is appropriated from the general fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for the water quality and storage program under Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.05. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until June 30, 2023.