

This Document can be made available  
in alternative formats upon request

# State of Minnesota

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION

H. F. No. **720**

02/20/2013 Authored by Hansen

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Policy

1.1 A bill for an act  
1.2 relating to natural resources; modifying soil and water conservation district  
1.3 consolidation provisions; amending Minnesota Statutes 2012, sections 103C.211;  
1.4 103C.311, subdivision 1; 103C.401, subdivision 1.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2012, section 103C.211, is amended to read:

1.7 **103C.211 CONSOLIDATION AND DIVISION OF DISTRICTS.**

1.8 (a) ~~A One or more districts may petition to consolidate two or more districts~~  
1.9 ~~or to separate a district into two or more districts may be filed with the state board~~  
1.10 ~~for a consolidation. The petition must be signed by the majority of each board of the~~  
1.11 ~~affected districts or by at least 100 resident owners within the affected districts. It is not~~  
1.12 ~~necessary to obtain the consent of fee owners in an established district before districts~~  
1.13 ~~are consolidated or an existing district is divided. Proceedings provided for petitions to~~  
1.14 ~~organize a district shall be followed as far as they are applicable. The state board shall~~  
1.15 ~~prescribe the form for a petition, which shall be as nearly as possible in the form for~~  
1.16 ~~petitions to organize a district. The board shall take action on the petition if signed by a~~  
1.17 ~~majority of the supervisors of each of the affected districts.~~

1.18 (b) ~~The eligible voters within the affected districts may vote in the referendum. The~~  
1.19 ~~state board may not determine the administrative feasibility of consolidating or separating~~  
1.20 ~~districts unless a majority of the votes cast in the referendum within each separate district~~  
1.21 ~~affected, or within each separate area sought to be made a separate district, is in favor of~~  
1.22 ~~the consolidation or separation.~~

1.23 (c) ~~When districts are consolidated or separated, the corporate existence and terms~~  
1.24 ~~of office of the officers of the old districts expire upon the issuance and recording by the~~

secretary of state of a certificate of organization of the new districts. Upon consolidation, the rights and liabilities of the consolidating districts shall be assumed by the consolidated district. Upon separation, the rights and liabilities of the original district shall be vested in and assumed by the new districts in an equitable proportion determined by the state board. A separation does not affect the term of office for which a supervisor was elected or appointed. The supervisor shall continue to represent the district where the supervisor resides for that full term.

(b) The petition must:

(1) describe with particularity the change requested, the territory affected, and the reasons for the change;

(2) illustrate that the change is consistent with the purpose and requirements of sections 103C.201 to 103C.335;

(3) identify the proposed name for the consolidated district;

(4) identify the location of the principal office of the consolidated district;

(5) identify potential changes to supervisor districts;

(6) identify changes in supervisors that would result from the proposed petition;

(7) provide a list of nominees for vacant supervisor positions; and

(8) be accompanied by resolutions of support signed by each district board affected by the change.

(c) Upon the filing of a valid petition, the state board shall give notice that the petition has been filed. The notice must:

(1) be made by publication in a legal newspaper in each county affected by the petition;

(2) be made by mail to the auditor of each county affected by the petition;

(3) describe the actions proposed by the petition;

(4) invite written comments on the petition for consideration by the state board;

(5) state that a person who objects to the actions proposed in the petition may submit a written request for hearing to the state board within 30 days of the last publication of the notice under this paragraph. The request must contain 25 or more signatures from resident owners residing in the districts; and

(6) state that if a timely request for hearing is not received, the state board may make a decision on the petition at a future meeting of the state board.

(d) If one or more timely requests for hearing are received, the state board must hold a hearing on the petition.

(e) The state board must establish the proposed change, by order, if the board determines the change promotes the public health and welfare and the proposed change would advance the purposes of this chapter.

(f) When districts are consolidated, the corporate existence and terms of office of the officers of the old districts expire upon the issuance and recording by the secretary of state of a certificate of organization of the new district. Upon consolidation, the rights, assets, and liabilities of the consolidating districts shall be assumed by the consolidated district.

(g) If nomination districts are changed, the state board shall appoint supervisors to fill vacancies resulting from the consolidation within 30 days after the action is taken. A majority of the supervisors' terms must expire after the next general election following their appointments and the remaining supervisors' terms must expire after the second general election following their appointments.

(h) No sooner than two years after the date of consolidation, the affected districts may petition the state board to have the action reversed through the same procedure outlined in paragraphs (a) to (f). When a consolidation is reversed, the state board shall order the appointments and distribution or transfer of assets and liabilities.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2012, section 103C.311, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Supervisors elected at large.** (a) The district board shall, with the approval of the state board, divide a district into supervisor districts for purposes of nomination for election. At each election after the division, one or more supervisors shall be nominated from each supervisor district. A supervisor must be a resident of the supervisor district to be elected.

(b) If the boundary of a soil and water conservation district has been substantially changed by a division of the district, the district shall be divided into supervisor districts for nomination purposes.

(c) Except for consolidation under section 103C.211, this subdivision does not disqualify a supervisor during the term for which the supervisor was elected or nominated for election. Supervisors nominated from the supervisor districts shall be included on the ballot for election from the entire area included in the soil and water conservation district.

(d) A certified copy of the minutes or the resolution of the supervisors establishing supervisor districts must be promptly filed by the chair of the district board with the county auditor of the counties where the district is located and with the state board.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2012, section 103C.401, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

4.1 Subdivision 1. **Powers and duties.** In addition to the powers and duties of the state  
4.2 board provided by other law, the state board shall:

4.3 (1) offer to assist the district boards to implement their programs;

4.4 (2) keep the district boards of the state informed of the activities and experience of  
4.5 other districts and facilitate cooperation and an interchange of advice and experience  
4.6 among the districts;

4.7 (3) coordinate the programs and activities of the districts with appropriate agencies  
4.8 by advice and consultation;

4.9 (4) approve or disapprove the plans or programs of districts relating to the use of  
4.10 state funds administered by the state board;

4.11 (5) secure the cooperation and assistance of agencies in the work of the districts  
4.12 and develop a program to advise and assist appropriate agencies in obtaining state and  
4.13 federal funds for erosion, sedimentation, flooding, and agriculturally related pollution  
4.14 control programs;

4.15 (6) develop and implement a public information program concerning the districts'  
4.16 activities and programs, the problems and preventive practices relating to erosion control,  
4.17 sedimentation, agriculturally related pollution, flood prevention, and the advantages of  
4.18 formation of districts in areas where their organization is desirable;

4.19 (7) ~~divide and consolidate districts without a hearing or a referendum to confine~~  
4.20 ~~districts within county limits, without allowing a district, if feasible and practicable, to~~  
4.21 ~~contain less than four full or fractional congressional townships;~~

4.22 (8) assist the statewide program to inventory and classify the types of soils in the  
4.23 state as determined by the Minnesota Cooperative Soil Survey;

4.24 (9) identify research needs and cooperate with other public agencies in research  
4.25 concerning the nature and extent of erosion, sedimentation, flooding and agriculturally  
4.26 related pollution, the amounts and sources of sediment and pollutants delivered to the  
4.27 waters of the state, and long-term soil productivity;

4.28 (10) develop structural, land use management practice, and other programs to reduce  
4.29 or prevent soil erosion, sedimentation, flooding, and agriculturally related pollution;

4.30 (11) develop a system of priorities to identify the erosion, flooding, sediment, and  
4.31 agriculturally related pollution problem areas that most need control systems;

4.32 (12) ensure compliance with statewide programs and policies established by the state  
4.33 board by advice, consultation, and approval of grant agreements with the districts; and

4.34 (13) service requests from districts to consolidate districts across county boundaries  
4.35 and facilitate other agreed-to reorganizations of districts with other districts or other local

- 5.1 units of government, including making grants, within the limits of available funds, to
- 5.2 offset the cost of consolidation or reorganization.