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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 936

02/10/2021

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

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to natural resources; establishing cost-share program for soil health;
1.3 appropriating money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter
1.4 103F.

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

1.6 Section 1. 103F.06 SOIL HEALTH COST-SHARE PROGRAM.

1.7 Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) For purposes of this section, the terms in this subdivision
1.8 have the meanings given them.

1.9 (b) "Board" means the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

1.10 (c) "Local units of government" has the meaning given under section 103B.305,
1.11 subdivision 5.

1.12 (d) "Soil health" has the meaning given under section 103C.101, subdivision 10a.

1.13 Subd. 2. Establishment. The board must establish a cost-share program consistent with
1.14 the provisions of section 103C.501 for the purpose of establishing soil health practices to
1.15 mitigate climate change impacts and improve water quality and related public benefits.

1.16 Subd. 3. Financial assistance. (a) The board may provide financial assistance to local
1.17 units of government for the costs of soil health and related water quality practices consistent
1.18 with a plan approved according to chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D. The board must establish
1.19 costs eligible for financial assistance under this section, including costs for conservation
1.20 planning, cover crop seeding, equipment acquisition or use, and other practices to improve
1.21 soil health.

2.1 (b) The board must enter into agreements with local units of government receiving
2.2 financial assistance under this section.

2.3 Subd. 4. **Technical assistance.** (a) The board may employ or contract with agronomists,
2.4 biologists, or hydrologists in implementing the cost-share program.

2.5 (b) When implementing the program, the board must:

2.6 (1) assist local units of government in achieving the goals of the program;

2.7 (2) review and assess practice standards; and

2.8 (3) evaluate the effectiveness of completed practices constructed with assistance from
2.9 the cost-share program.

2.10 (c) The board shall cooperate with the Minnesota Office for Soil Health at the University
2.11 of Minnesota, the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation
2.12 Service, and other agencies and private sector organizations as needed to enhance program
2.13 effectiveness.

2.14 Subd. 5. **Federal aid availability.** The board shall regularly complete an analysis of the
2.15 availability of federal funds and programs to supplement or complement state and local
2.16 efforts consistent with the purposes of this section.

2.17 Subd. 6. **Report.** By January 15, 2024, the board shall evaluate the effectiveness of the
2.18 program under this section and submit a report with the results and recommendations to the
2.19 chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees
2.20 and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources. The report shall
2.21 include an assessment of the applicability and viability of tools to assist farm operators and
2.22 landowners in evaluating nutrient, soil organic matter, and soil loss management practices
2.23 on individual fields.

2.24 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION.**

2.25 \$2,750,000 in fiscal year 2022 and \$2,750,000 in fiscal year 2023 are appropriated from
2.26 the general fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for the soil health program under
2.27 Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.06.