

By the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources; and
Senator Hutson

592-02256-22

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to soil and water conservation
3 districts; amending s. 582.15, F.S.; providing for the
4 subdivision of certain proposed soil and water
5 conservation districts; requiring the Department of
6 Agriculture and Consumer Services to subdivide certain
7 proposed soil and water conservation districts;
8 amending s. 582.18, F.S.; requiring the supervisors of
9 each soil and water conservation district to be
10 elected from each of the district's subdivisions;
11 providing for the initial terms of office of
12 candidates elected in each district subdivision;
13 amending s. 582.19, F.S.; providing qualification
14 requirements for supervisors to serve on the governing
15 body of a soil and water conservation district;
16 providing for the expiration of the terms of office of
17 certain supervisors serving on soil and water
18 conservation district governing bodies; providing for
19 the subdivision of certain soil and water conservation
20 districts by a specified date; requiring the
21 department to subdivide certain soil and water
22 conservation districts by a specified date; providing
23 transitional provisions regarding the implementation
24 of newly subdivided districts and the election of
25 supervisors; providing an effective date.

26
27 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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29 Section 1. Subsection (4) is added to section 582.15,

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30 Florida Statutes, to read:

31 582.15 Organization of district, etc.—

32 (4) After the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
33 Services has determined that operation of a proposed district is
34 administratively practicable and feasible, the district shall be
35 subdivided into five numbered subdivisions that match, as
36 practicable, the boundaries of either the five county commission
37 districts or five school board districts within the county. When
38 neither the county commission nor the school board is subdivided
39 into five districts, the department shall subdivide the district
40 into five numbered subdivisions as nearly equal in area as
41 practicable to ensure geographical representation within that
42 soil and water conservation district's governing body.

43 Section 2. Subsection (1) of section 582.18, Florida
44 Statutes, is amended to read:

45 582.18 Election of supervisors of each district.—

46 (1) The election of supervisors for each soil and water
47 conservation district shall be held every 2 years, with one
48 supervisor elected from each of the five numbered subdivisions
49 created by the department pursuant to s. 582.15(4). The
50 elections shall be held at the time of the general election
51 provided for by s. 100.041. The office of the supervisor of a
52 soil and water conservation district is a nonpartisan office,
53 and candidates for such office are prohibited from campaigning
54 or qualifying for election based on party affiliation.

55 (a) Each candidate for supervisor for such district must
56 ~~shall~~ qualify as directed by chapter 99.

57 (b) Each nominee who collects or expends campaign
58 contributions shall conduct her or his campaign for supervisor

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59 of a soil and water conservation district in accordance with the
60 provisions of chapter 106. Candidates who neither receive
61 contributions nor make expenditures, other than expenditures for
62 verification of signatures on petitions, are exempt from the
63 provisions of chapter 106 requiring establishment of bank
64 accounts and appointment of a campaign treasurer, but shall file
65 periodic reports as required by s. 106.07.

66 (c) The names of all nominees on behalf of whom such
67 nominating petitions have been filed shall appear upon ballots
68 in accordance with the general election laws. All qualified
69 electors residing within the district shall be eligible to vote
70 in such election. The candidates who receive the largest number
71 of the votes cast from each group of candidates in such election
72 shall be the elected supervisors from such group for such
73 district. In the case of a newly created district participating
74 in a regular election for the first time, ~~three groups of~~
75 candidates shall be elected from district subdivisions 1, 3, and
76 5 for terms of 4 years, and candidates ~~two groups~~ shall be
77 elected from district subdivisions 2 and 4 for initial terms of
78 2 years. Each candidate elected shall assume office on the first
79 Tuesday after the first Monday in January following the
80 election.

81 Section 3. Subsection (1) of section 582.19, Florida
82 Statutes, is amended to read:

83 582.19 Qualifications and tenure of supervisors.—

84 (1) The governing body of the district shall consist of
85 five supervisors, elected as provided in s. 582.18 hereinabove.
86 To qualify to serve on the governing body of a district, a
87 supervisor must be an eligible voter who resides within the

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88 numbered subdivision from which she or he is elected and must be
89 actively engaged in the business of farming or animal husbandry.

90 Section 4. (1) The term of office of a supervisor serving
91 on a soil and water conservation district's governing body at
92 the time of this act becoming a law expires on January 10, 2023.

93 (2) By January 1, 2023, a district in existence on July 1,
94 2022, which was not subdivided in its initial creation pursuant
95 to chapter 582, Florida Statutes, must be subdivided into five
96 numbered subdivisions that match, as practicable, the boundaries
97 of either the five county commission districts or five school
98 board districts in the county. When neither the county
99 commission nor the school board is subdivided into five
100 districts, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
101 shall subdivide the district into five numbered subdivisions as
102 nearly equal in area as practicable to ensure geographical
103 representation within that soil and water conservation
104 district's governing body.

105 (3) The following procedures apply to the election of
106 supervisors of soil and water conservation districts subdivided
107 by the department pursuant to subsection (2):

108 (a) District governing body seats 1, 3, and 5, which have
109 terms that initially expired in January 2025 or 2027, as
110 applicable depending on the year in which the district was
111 formed, shall represent district subdivisions 1, 3, and 5,
112 respectively. Such seats shall be filled for a term of 4 years.

113 (b) District governing body seats 2 and 4, which have terms
114 that initially expired in January 2025 or 2027, as applicable
115 depending on the year in which the district was formed, shall
116 represent district subdivisions 2 and 4, respectively. Such

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117 seats shall initially be filled for a term of 2 years in order
118 to achieve staggered terms; thereafter, any such seats shall be
119 filled for a term of 4 years as provided under s. 582.19,
120 Florida Statutes.

121 Section 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.