



BILL SUMMARY

HF 756 Watershed and Floodplain Management Policies

Status of Bill: House Floor
Committee: Environmental Protection (12-9)
Floor Manager: Rep. Gayman
Research Analyst: Bill Freeland 281-6311
bill.freeland@legis.state.ia.us

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Background

This proposal is similar to the Surface Water Task Force created during the 2008 session. The bill will change the Surface Water Task Force to consider watershed and flood mitigation management. Several departments within state government are already working on this issue, including IDALS and DNR. The bill addresses concerns of state agencies to include experts in the decision making process of watershed and flood mitigation management.

Section by Section

Section 1

Adds additional purposes to the watershed improvement fund. Adds that the board must ensure that there is public participation in determining priorities related to water quality for structures and conservation systems that mitigate flooding and removal of channels and meander of waterways.

Section 2

Changes the title of the Surface Water Protection Act to the Surface Water Protection and Flood Mitigation Act.

Section 3

Adds the additional outcome of the reduction of potential for flood damage to each watershed in the state to determining the success of the water resources coordinating council.

Section 4

Allows the governor to invite experts on flood mitigation to give public input at water resource coordinating council meetings.

Section 5

Adds the dean of college of University of Iowa College of Engineering, the director of the Rebuild Iowa Office, the director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and the director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Education of the University of Northern Iowa, or the directors' designees, to the water resources coordinating council.

Section 6

Allows the water resources coordinating council to review best available technologies on a regular basis to assure that projects will best and most effectively reduce flood damage to regional and community watersheds.

Section 7

Adds a new paragraph to the duties and powers of the water resources coordinating council. The bill requires the council to determine policies and funding to promote watershed management to reduce the impact of future flooding on Iowa's residents, businesses, communities, and soil and water quality. Recommendations must be submitted to the governor by November 15, 2009. The council may consider additional flood plain regulation; wetland protection, restoration and construction; conservation easements and other land management practices; perennial ground cover and other agricultural practices; pervious pavement, bioswales, and other urban conservation practices; and permanent or temporary water retention structures.

The council is instructed to consult with the Rebuild Iowa Office, hydrological and land use experts, cities, counties, and soil and water conservation districts, and any other urban and regional planning experts.

Section 8

Adds that the general assembly finds that land in a watershed and flood plain should be managed to reduce flooding and flood damage, reduce the effects of drought, improve water quality, improve habitat and the natural environment, increase renewable energy production, and enhance economic and recreational opportunities.

Amendment Summary

H-1232 by Gayman (D) – Removes the director of the Rebuild Iowa Office, the director of the Leopold Center for sustainable agriculture, and the director of the energy and environmental education of the University of Northern Iowa from the water resources council. Adds storm water management standards to the considerations of the council may take in developing watershed management approaches to reduce the impact of flooding.

H-1248 by Gayman (D) – Strikes the removal of the director of the Rebuild Iowa Office onto the water resources council. Sunsets the RIO representation on the board on June 30, 2011.

H-1632 by Mertz (D) – Adds drainage and levee districts to the organizations the council should consult with

H-1604 by Swaim (D) – Allows counties to be eligible to receive local watershed improvement grants for water quality improvement projects. Currently county conservation boards, cities, and public water supply utilities are eligible for the grants under this provision.

H-1629 by Isenhardt, Kearns, Beard, Bukta, Reichert, Gayman, Thede, Winckler, Cohoon, and Lykam (D) – Creates the Mississippi River Partnership Council. The council is intended to be a forum for city, county, state, agriculture, business, conservation, and environmental representatives and stakeholders to discuss matters relevant to the Mississippi River. The amendment establishes the procedures and structure of the council.