

Water Quality, Soil Health, and Watershed Improvement Bill House File 2642

Last Action:
**House Appropriations
Committee**
March 6, 2024

Executive Summary Only

An Act relating to the conservation and improvement of soil and water resources, including by providing for the administration of associated programs and regulations, making appropriations, and including effective date provisions.

**Fiscal Services Division
Legislative Services Agency**

NOTES ON BILLS AND AMENDMENTS (NOBA)

Available online at www.legis.iowa.gov/publications/information/appropriationBillAnalysis

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HOUSE FILE 2642

WATER QUALITY, SOIL HEALTH, AND WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT BILL

FUNDING SUMMARY

Appropriates \$456,000 in FY 2025 from the State Parks and Recreation Areas Operations Fund (SPRAOF) for interoperative radios for park rangers and directs remaining moneys in the Fund to be used to improve accessibility in State parks and recreational areas for people with disabilities.

Page 9, Line 4

NEW PROGRAMS, SERVICES, OR ACTIVITIES

Creates the SPRAOF under the control of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Fund is to be used by the DNR to pay for maintenance and improvements in State parks and recreation areas and by supporting infrastructure and the professional needs of park rangers and conservation officers. Moneys deposited in the Fund will not revert and will remain available for expenditure. Interest earned from moneys in the Fund will be deposited in the Fund.

Page 8, Line 8

MAJOR INCREASES/DECREASES/TRANSFERS OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

Requires the principal and interest from any loan that would have been payable to the Blufflands Protection Revolving Fund to instead be deposited into the SPRAOF.

Page 7, Line 22

Transfers the balance of the Blufflands Protection Revolving Fund to the SPRAOF created in the Bill, no later than September 30, 2024. The current balance of the Fund is approximately \$640,000.

Page 8, Line 33

Suspends the Blufflands Protection Program and limits money in the Blufflands Protection Revolving Fund to only be used to wind down existing obligations. This section is repealed on October 1, 2024.

Page 9, Line 17

SIGNIFICANT CODE CHANGES

Adds the definition of "soil health" to various Iowa Code sections and makes updates to Iowa Code chapter [161A](#) in regard to soil and water conservation.

Page 1, Line 1

Changes the Blufflands Protection Program and Revolving Fund repeal date from July 1, 2030 to October 1, 2024.

Page 7, Line 19

Repeals the requirement for the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a report on a biennial basis to the Governor that proposes the uses of Groundwater Protection Fund (GWPF) moneys and reports the uses of GWPF moneys appropriated in the previous two fiscal years.

Page 9, Line 34

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WATER QUALITY, SOIL HEALTH, AND WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT BILL

Moves the Prairie Seed Harvest Program to its own Iowa Code section, repeals the five-year goals for both the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Conservation Buffer Strip Program, makes changes to the Water Quality Protection Program, and moves portions of the Water Quality Protection Program to its own Iowa Code section. Page 10, Line 1

Updates and repeals definitions in Iowa Code section [466B.2](#). Page 13, Line 8

Updates definitions; creates a new Iowa Code section that outlines the members, meetings, quorum requirements, duties, and powers of the Water Resources Coordinating Council; updates rulemaking authority; and repeals various Iowa Code sections related to watershed management. Page 13, Line 33

Changes references to watershed management authorities to references to watershed partnerships and changes the duties and governing bodies of watershed partnerships. Page 17, Line 20

Provides transitional provisions for transitioning from the use of the term Watershed Management Authorities to the use of the term Watershed Partnerships. Page 21, Line 19

Repeals the Watershed Planning Advisory Council. Page 22, Line 9

Updates references in Iowa Code to accurately reflect changes made in this Bill. Page 22, Line 12

Makes coordinating amendments to conform to changes made in this Bill. Page 23, Line 24

Provides the Iowa Code Editor with directions related to handling Iowa Code changes in the Bill. Page 27, Line 2

EFFECTIVE DATE

Division I of the Bill takes effect July 1, 2024, except for the section of the Division suspending the Blufflands Protection Program and limiting the expenditure of moneys from the Blufflands Protection Revolving Fund, which is effective upon enactment. Page 9, Line 25

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Other Funds

	Actual FY 2023 (1)	Estimated FY 2024 (2)	House Approp FY 2025 (3)	Hse Appr FY25 vs Est FY 2024 (4)	Page and Line # (5)
<u>Natural Resources, Department of</u>					
Natural Resources					
Interoperative Radios - SPRAOF	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 456,000	\$ 456,000	PG 9 LN 4
Total Natural Resources, Department of	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 456,000	\$ 456,000	
Total Agriculture and Natural Resources	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 456,000	\$ 456,000	