

161A.4 Division of soil conservation and water quality — state soil conservation and water quality committee.

1. The division of soil conservation and water quality created within the department pursuant to [section 159.5](#) shall perform the functions conferred upon it in [this chapter](#) and [chapters 161C, 161E, 161F, 207, and 208](#). The division shall be administered in accordance with the policies of the committee, which shall advise the division and which shall approve administrative rules proposed by the division for the administration of [this chapter](#) and [chapters 161C, 161E, 161F, 207, and 208](#) before the rules are adopted pursuant to [section 17A.5](#). If a difference exists between the committee and secretary regarding the content of a proposed rule, the secretary shall notify the chairperson of the committee of the difference within thirty days from the committee's action on the rule. The secretary and the committee shall meet to resolve the difference within thirty days after the secretary provides the committee with notice of the difference.

2. In addition to other duties and powers conferred upon the division of soil conservation and water quality, the division has the following duties and powers:

a. To offer assistance as appropriate to the commissioners of soil and water conservation districts in carrying out any of their powers and programs.

b. To take notice of each district's long-range resource conservation plan established under [section 161A.7](#), in order to keep the commissioners of each of the several districts informed of the activities and experience of all other districts, and to facilitate an interchange of advice and experience between such districts and cooperation between them.

c. To coordinate the programs of the soil and water conservation districts so far as this may be done by advice and consultation.

d. To secure the cooperation and assistance of the United States and any of its agencies, and of agencies of this state, in the work of such districts.

e. To disseminate information throughout the state concerning the activities and program of the soil and water conservation districts.

f. To render financial aid and assistance to soil and water conservation districts for the purpose of carrying out the policy stated in [this chapter](#).

g. To assist each soil and water conservation district in developing a district soil and water resource conservation plan as provided under [section 161A.7](#). The plan shall be developed according to rules adopted by the division to preserve and protect the public interest in the soil and water resources of this state for future generations and for this purpose to encourage, promote, facilitate, and where such public interest requires, to mandate the conservation and proper control of and use of the soil and water resources of this state, by measures including but not limited to the control of floods, the control of erosion by water or by wind, the preservation of the quality of water for its optimum use for agricultural, irrigation, recreational, industrial, and domestic purposes, all of which shall be presumed to be conducive to the public health, convenience, and welfare, both present and future.

h. To file the district soil and water resource conservation plans as part of a state soil and water resource conservation plan. The state plan shall contain on a statewide basis the information required for a district plan under [this section](#).

i. To establish a position of state drainage coordinator for drainage districts and drainage and levee districts which will keep the management of those districts informed of the activities and experience of all other such districts and facilitate an interchange of advice, experience and cooperation among the districts, coordinate by advice and consultation the programs of the districts, secure the cooperation and assistance of the United States and its agencies and of the agencies of this state and other states in the work of the districts, disseminate information throughout the state concerning the activities and programs of the districts, and provide other appropriate assistance to the districts.

3. The division, in consultation with the commissioners of the soil and water conservation districts, shall conduct a biennial review to survey the availability of private soil and water conservation control contractors in each district. A report containing the results of the review shall be prepared and posted on the department's internet site.

4. A state soil conservation and water quality committee is established within the department.

a. The nine voting members of the committee shall be appointed by the governor subject to confirmation by the senate pursuant to [section 2.32](#), and shall include the following:

(1) Six of the members shall be persons engaged in actual farming operations, one of whom shall be a resident of each of six geographic regions in the state, including northwest, southwest, north central, south central, northeast, and southeast Iowa, and no more than one of whom shall be a resident of any one county. The boundaries of the geographic regions shall be established by rule.

(2) The seventh, eighth, and ninth appointive members shall be chosen by the governor from the state at large, with one appointed to be a representative of cities, one appointed to be a representative of the mining industry, and one appointee who is a farmer actively engaged in tree farming.

b. The committee may invite the secretary of agriculture of the United States to appoint one person to serve with the other members, and the president of the Iowa county engineers association may designate a member of the association to serve in the same manner, but these persons have no vote and shall serve in an advisory capacity only.

c. The following shall serve as ex officio nonvoting members of the committee:

(1) The director of the Iowa cooperative extension service in agriculture and home economics, or the director's designee.

(2) The director of the department of natural resources or the director's designee.

5. a. The committee shall designate its chairperson, and may change the designation. The members appointed by the governor shall serve for a period of six years. Members shall be appointed in each odd-numbered year to succeed members whose terms expire as provided by [section 69.19](#). Appointments may be made at other times and for other periods as necessary to fill vacancies on the committee. Members shall not be appointed to serve more than two complete six-year terms. Members designated to represent the director of the department of natural resources and the director of the Iowa cooperative extension service in agriculture and home economics shall serve at the pleasure of the officer making the designation.

b. A majority of the voting members of the committee constitutes a quorum, and the concurrence of a majority of the voting members of the committee in any matter within their duties is required for its determination.

c. Members are entitled to actual expenses necessarily incurred in the discharge of their duties as members of the committee. The expenses paid to the committee members shall be paid from funds appropriated to the department. Each member of the committee may also be eligible to receive compensation as provided in [section 7E.6](#). The committee shall provide for the execution of surety bonds for all employees and officers who are entrusted with funds or property, shall provide for the keeping of a full and accurate record of all proceedings and of all resolutions and orders issued or adopted, and shall provide for an annual audit of the accounts of receipts and disbursements.

6. a. The committee may perform acts, hold public hearings, and propose and approve rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) as necessary for the execution of its functions.

b. The committee shall recommend to the secretary each year a budget for the division. The secretary, at the earliest opportunity and prior to formulating a budget, shall meet with representatives of the committee to discuss the committee's recommendation.

c. The committee shall recommend three persons to the secretary of agriculture who shall appoint from the persons recommended a director to head the division and serve at the pleasure of the secretary. After reviewing the names submitted, the secretary may request that the committee submit additional names for consideration.

7. The committee or division may call upon the attorney general of the state for necessary legal services. The committee may delegate to its chairperson, to one or more of its members, or to one or more agents or employees, powers and duties as it deems proper. Upon request of the committee, for the purpose of carrying out any of the functions assigned the committee or the department by law, the supervising officer of any state agency, or of any state institution of learning shall, insofar as possible under available appropriations, and having due regard

to the needs of the agency to which the request is directed, assign or detail the request to the staff or personnel of the agency or institution of learning, and make the special reports, surveys, or studies as the committee requests.

[C39, §2603.05; C46, §160.4; C50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, §467A.4; C73, §455A.40(3), 467A.4; C75, 77, 79, 81, §467A.4; 82 Acts, ch 1199, §73, 74, 96]

83 Acts, ch 101, §102; 85 Acts, ch 163, §13; 86 Acts, ch 1245, §648 – 650, 668; 87 Acts, ch 23, §17; 88 Acts, ch 1198, §1, 2; 89 Acts, ch 83, §56; 89 Acts, ch 106, §2

C93, §161A.4

2004 Acts, ch 1143, §1; 2007 Acts, ch 22, §43; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §59; 2015 Acts, ch 103, §27 – 29; 2017 Acts, ch 159, §4 – 6

Referred to in §159.5, 161A.3, 161A.7, 161C.1, 207.2, 208.2, 266.39, 460.303, 461.11