

CHAPTER 466B

SURFACE WATER PROTECTION,
FLOOD MITIGATION, AND
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Referred to in §461.34

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SUBCHAPTER I

SURFACE WATER PROTECTION AND
FLOOD MITIGATION**466B.1 Short title.**

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the “*Surface Water Protection and Flood Mitigation Act*”.

2008 Acts, ch 1034, §1; 2009 Acts, ch 146, §7

466B.2 Definitions.

For the purposes of this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “*Council*” means the water resources coordinating council created in section 466B.3.
2. “*Department*” means the department of natural resources.
3. “*Regional watershed*” means a watershed of hydrologic unit code scale 8.
4. “*Subwatershed*” means a watershed of hydrologic unit code scale 12 or smaller.
5. “*Watershed*” means a geographic area in which surface water is drained by rivers, streams, or other bodies of water.

2008 Acts, ch 1034, §2

466B.3 Water resources coordinating council.

1. *Council established.* A water resources coordinating council is established within the department of agriculture and land stewardship.

2. *Purpose.* The purpose of the council shall be to preserve and protect Iowa’s water resources, and to coordinate the management of those resources in a sustainable and fiscally responsible manner. In the pursuit of this purpose, the council shall use an integrated approach to water resource management, recognizing that insufficiencies exist in current approaches and practices, as well as in funding sources and the utilization of funds. The integrated approach used by the council shall attempt to overcome old categories, labels, and obstacles with the primary goal of managing the state’s water resources comprehensively rather than compartmentally.

3. *Accountability.* The success of the council's efforts shall ultimately be measured by the following outcomes:

- a. Whether the citizens of Iowa can more easily organize local watershed projects.
- b. Whether the citizens of Iowa can more easily access available funds and water quality program resources.
- c. Whether the funds, programs, and regulatory efforts coordinated by the council eventually result in a long-term improvement to the quality of surface water in Iowa.

d. Whether the potential for flood damage in each watershed in the state has been reduced.

4. *Membership.* The council shall consist of the following members:

- a. The director of the department of natural resources or the director's designee.
- b. The director of the soil conservation division of the department of agriculture and land stewardship or the director's designee.
- c. The director of the department of public health or the director's designee.
- d. The administrator of the homeland security and emergency management division of the department of public defense or the administrator's designee.
- e. The dean of the college of agriculture and life sciences at Iowa state university or the dean's designee.
- f. The dean of the college of public health at the university of Iowa or the dean's designee.
- g. The dean of the college of natural sciences at the university of northern Iowa or the dean's designee.
- h. The director of the department of transportation or the director's designee.
- i. The director of the economic development authority or the director's designee.
- j. The executive director of the Iowa finance authority or the executive director's designee.
- k. The secretary of agriculture, who shall be the chairperson, or the secretary's designee.

As the chairperson, and in order to further the coordination efforts of the council, the secretary may invite representatives from any other public agency, private organization, business, citizen group, or nonprofit entity to give public input at council meetings, provided the entity has an interest in the coordinated management of land resources, soil conservation, flood mitigation, or water quality. The secretary shall also invite and solicit advice from the following:

- (1) The director of the Iowa water science center of the United States geological survey or the director's designee.
- (2) The state conservationist from the Iowa office of the United States department of agriculture's natural resources conservation service or the state conservationist's designee.
- (3) The executive director for Iowa from the United States department of agriculture's farm services agency or the executive director's designee.
- (4) The state director for Iowa from the United States department of agriculture's office of rural development or the state director's designee.
- (5) The director of region seven of the United States environmental protection agency or the director's designee.
- (6) The corps commander from the United States army corps of engineers' Rock Island district or the commander's designee.

l. The dean of the college of engineering at the university of Iowa or the dean's designee.

5. *Meetings and quorum.*

- a. The council shall be convened by the secretary of agriculture at least quarterly.
- b. A majority of the members fixed by statute shall constitute a quorum, and any action taken by the council must be adopted by a majority of the voting membership.

6. *Duties and powers.*

a. The council shall engage in the regular coordination of water resource-related functions, including protection strategies, planning, assessment, prioritization, review, concurrence, advocacy, and education.

b. In coordinating water resource-related functions, the council may do all of the following:

- (1) Consider the steps necessary to address the planning, management, and implementation of water resource improvement.

(2) Identify ways to facilitate communication and participation among all water resource stakeholders, including owners of land in Iowa whether they are residents or not.

(3) Identify inefficiencies in current programs and recommend ways to eliminate duplicative services.

(4) Improve the availability and management of water resource information.

(5) Provide incentives for, and recognition of, environmental excellence.

(6) Regularly assess and identify measurable improvements in water quality.

(7) Oversee the complete, statewide regional watershed assessment, prioritization, and planning process described in section 466B.5, including a short-term interim program and a long-term comprehensive state water quality and quantity plan updated every five years as provided in sections 466B.5 and 466B.6.

(8) Develop a protocol which identifies high-priority watersheds, including local and community-based subwatersheds, and which appropriately directs resources to those watersheds.

(9) Review best available technologies on a regular basis, so that investments of time and program resources can be prioritized and directed to projects that will best and most effectively improve water quality and reduce flood damage within regional and community subwatersheds.

(10) Review voluntary, performance-based standards for water resource management, land management, and soil conservation.

(11) Develop a protocol for assigning multiagency teams to regional watersheds and local subwatersheds and guide those teams in the coordination of citizen and agency activities within those watersheds.

(12) Engage in dialogue with, and pursue efforts to make cooperative agreements with, other states when a watershed extends beyond borders of this state.

(13) Enter into agreements and make contracts with third parties for the performance of duties imposed by this chapter.

(14) Prepare a memorandum of understanding identifying the roles and responsibilities of council members in the coordination of the implementation of community-based subwatershed improvement plans. The memorandum shall be a commitment by the agencies participating in council meetings to reach consensus regarding communications with subwatershed planning units.

c. The council shall develop recommendations for policies and funding promoting a watershed management approach to reduce the adverse impact of future flooding on this state's residents, businesses, communities, and soil and water quality. The council shall consider policies and funding options for various strategies to reduce the impact of flooding including but not limited to additional floodplain regulation; wetland protection, restoration, and construction; the promulgation and implementation of statewide storm water management standards; conservation easements and other land management; perennial ground cover and other agricultural conservation practices; pervious pavement, bioswales, and other urban conservation practices; and permanent or temporary water retention structures. In developing recommendations, the council shall consult with hydrological and land use experts, representatives of cities, counties, drainage and levee districts, agricultural interests, and soil and water conservation districts, and other urban and regional planning experts.

2008 Acts, ch 1034, §3; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §139; 2009 Acts, ch 146, §8 – 12; 2010 Acts, ch 1061, §62; 2011 Acts, ch 118, §85, 89; 2011 Acts, ch 119, §1 – 5; 2012 Acts, ch 1021, §86; 2012 Acts, ch 1023, §65

Referred to in §28N.3, 466B.2

[T] Subsection 4, paragraph k, unnumbered paragraph 1 amended

[T] Subsection 4, paragraph m stricken

466B.4 Legislative findings and marketing campaign.

1. *Findings.* The general assembly finds all of the following:

a. Most Iowans desire to have improved water quality throughout the state, but many Iowans do not understand the problems with local water quality.

b. Most Iowans believe that the protection of fish and wildlife benefits all Iowans.

c. The benefits of improving water quality could far outweigh the costs of implementing mechanisms to improve it.

d. Most Iowans look to some level of government for the protection of water resources rather than to themselves and their own actions. However, it is not possible or desirable for state government to take complete control and responsibility for water quality.

e. In addition to the use of Iowa land for agriculture and economic development, the land in watersheds and floodplains should be managed to reduce flooding, reduce flood damage, ameliorate the effects of drought, improve water quality, improve habitat and the natural environment, increase renewable energy production, and enhance recreational opportunities.

2. *Marketing campaign.* The water resources coordinating council shall develop a marketing campaign to educate Iowans about the need to take personal responsibility for the quality and quantity of water in their local watersheds. The emphasis of the campaign shall be that not only is everyone responsible for clean water, but that everyone benefits from it as well, and that everyone is responsible for and benefits from reducing the risk for flooding and mitigating possible future flood damage. The goals of the campaign shall be to convince Iowans to take personal responsibility for clean water and reducing the risk of flooding and to equip them with the tools necessary to effect change through local water quality improvement projects and better flood plain management and flood risk programs.

3. *Contingent on funding.* The duties imposed in subsection 2 are contingent upon the receipt of funding sufficient to cover the costs associated with the marketing campaign.

2008 Acts, ch 1034, §4; 2009 Acts, ch 146, §13; 2010 Acts, ch 1193, §127

466B.5 Regional watershed assessment, planning, and prioritization.

1. *Regional watershed assessment program.* The department of natural resources shall create a regional watershed assessment program. The program shall assess all the regional watersheds in the state.

a. The statewide assessment shall be conducted at the rate of approximately one-fifth of the watersheds per year, and an initial full assessment shall be completed within five years. Thereafter, the department of natural resources shall review and update the assessments on a regular basis.

b. Each regional watershed assessment shall provide a summary of the overall condition of the watershed. The information provided in the summary may include land use patterns, soil types, slopes, management practices, stream conditions, and both point and nonpoint source impairments.

c. In conducting a regional watershed assessment, the department of natural resources may provide opportunities for local data collection and input into the assessment process.

2. *Planning and prioritization.* In conducting the regional watershed assessment program, the department of natural resources shall provide hydrological and geological information sufficient for the water resources coordinating council to prioritize watersheds statewide and for the various communities in those watersheds to plan remedial efforts in their local communities and subwatersheds.

3. *Report to council.* Upon completion of the statewide assessment, and upon updating the assessments, the department of natural resources shall report the results of the assessment to the council and the general assembly, and shall make the report publicly available.

2008 Acts, ch 1034, §5; 2011 Acts, ch 119, §6

Referred to in §466B.3, 466B.9

466B.6 Community-based subwatershed improvement plans.

1. *Facilitation of community-based subwatershed plans.* After the department of natural resources' completion of the initial regional watershed assessment, and after the council's prioritization of the regional watersheds, the council shall designate one or more of the agencies represented on the council to facilitate the development and implementation of local, community-based subwatershed improvement plans.

2. *Assessment, planning, prioritization, and implementation.* In facilitating the development of community-based subwatershed improvement plans, the agency or agencies

designated by the council shall, based on the results of the regional watershed assessment program, identify critical subwatersheds within priority regional watersheds and recruit communities, citizen groups, local governmental entities, or other stakeholders to engage in the assessment, planning, prioritization, and implementation of a local community-based subwatershed improvement plan. The agency or agencies designated by the council may assist in the formation of a group of initial local community-based subwatershed improvement plans that can be implemented as pilot projects, in order to develop an effective process that can be replicated across the state.

2008 Acts, ch 1034, §6; 2011 Acts, ch 119, §7

Referred to in §466B.3

466B.7 Community-based subwatershed monitoring.

1. *Monitoring assistance.* After completion of the statewide regional watershed assessment and prioritization, and throughout the implementation of local community-based subwatershed improvement plans, the department of natural resources shall assist communities with the monitoring and measurement of local subwatersheds. The monitoring and measurement shall be designed for the particular needs of individual communities.

2. *Data collection and use.* Local communities in which the department of natural resources conducts subwatershed monitoring shall use the information to support subwatershed planning activities, do local data collection, and identify priority areas needing additional resources. Local communities shall also collect data over time and use the data to evaluate the impacts of their management efforts.

2008 Acts, ch 1034, §7; 2011 Acts, ch 119, §8

466B.8 Wastewater and storm water infrastructure assessment.

The department of natural resources shall assess and prioritize communities within a watershed presenting the greatest level of risk to water quality and the health of residents. This prioritization shall include both sewer and unsewered communities.

2008 Acts, ch 1034, §8; 2011 Acts, ch 119, §9

466B.9 Rulemaking authority.

The department of natural resources and the department of agriculture and land stewardship shall have the power and authority reasonably necessary to carry out the duties imposed by this chapter. As to the department of natural resources, this includes rulemaking authority to carry out the regional watershed assessment program described in section 466B.5. As to the department of agriculture and land stewardship, this includes rulemaking authority to assist in the implementation of community-based subwatershed improvement plans.

2008 Acts, ch 1034, §9; 2011 Acts, ch 119, §10

466B.10 Floodplain managers.

The council shall encourage and support the formation of a chapter of the association of state floodplain managers in Iowa that would provide a vehicle for local floodplain managers and floodplain planners to further pursue professional educational opportunities.

2010 Acts, ch 1193, §128

466B.11 Flood education.

The Iowa state university agricultural extension service, the council, and agency members of the council shall, to the extent feasible, work with floodplain and hydrology experts to educate the general public about floodplains, flood risks, and basic floodplain management principles. This educational effort shall include developing educational materials and programs in consultation with floodplain experts.

2010 Acts, ch 1193, §129

SUBCHAPTER II

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

466B.21 Definitions.

As used in this subchapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “*Authority*” means a watershed management authority created pursuant to a chapter 28E agreement as provided in this subchapter.
2. “*Board*” means a board of directors of a watershed management authority.
3. “*Political subdivision*” means cities, counties, and soil and water conservation districts. 2010 Acts, ch 1116, §3

466B.22 Watershed management authorities created.

1. Two or more political subdivisions may create, by chapter 28E agreement, a watershed management authority pursuant to this subchapter. The participating political subdivisions must be located in the same United States geological survey hydrologic unit code 8 watershed. All political subdivisions within a watershed must be notified within thirty days prior to organization of any watershed management authority within the watershed, and provided the opportunity to participate.
2. The chapter 28E agreement shall include a map showing the area and boundaries of the authority.
3. A political subdivision may participate in more than one authority created pursuant to this subchapter.
4. A political subdivision is not required to participate in a watershed management authority or be a party to a chapter 28E agreement under this subchapter. 2010 Acts, ch 1116, §4

466B.23 Duties.

A watershed management authority may perform all of the following duties:

1. Assess the flood risks in the watershed.
2. Assess the water quality in the watershed.
3. Assess options for reducing flood risk and improving water quality in the watershed.
4. Monitor federal flood risk planning and activities.
5. Educate residents of the watershed area regarding water quality and flood risks.
6. Allocate moneys made available to the authority for purposes of water quality and flood mitigation.
7. Make and enter into contracts and agreements and execute all instruments necessary or incidental to the performance of the duties of the authority. A watershed management authority shall not acquire property by eminent domain. 2010 Acts, ch 1116, §5

466B.24 Board of directors.

1. An authority shall be governed by a board of directors. Members of a board of directors of an authority shall be divided among the political subdivisions comprising the authority and shall be appointed by the respective political subdivision’s elected legislative body.
2. A board of directors shall consist of one representative of each participating political subdivision. This subsection shall not apply if a chapter 28E agreement under this subchapter provides an alternative board composition method.
3. The directors shall serve staggered terms of four years. The initial board shall determine, by lot, the initial terms to be shortened and lengthened, as necessary, to achieve staggered terms. A person appointed to fill a vacancy shall be appointed in the same manner as the original appointment for the duration of the unexpired term. A director is eligible for reappointment. This subsection shall not apply if a chapter 28E agreement under this subchapter provides an alternative for the length of term, appointment, and reappointment of directors.
4. A board may provide procedures for the removal of a director who fails to attend three

consecutive regular meetings of the board. If a director is so removed, a successor shall be appointed for the duration of the unexpired term of the removed director in the same manner as the original appointment. The appointing body may at any time remove a director appointed by it for misfeasance, nonfeasance, or malfeasance in office.

5. A board shall adopt bylaws and shall elect one director as chairperson and one director as vice chairperson, each for a term of two years, and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a director.

6. A majority of the membership of a board of directors shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of holding a meeting of the board. The affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum shall be necessary for any action taken by an authority unless the authority's bylaws specify those particular actions of the authority requiring a greater number of affirmative votes. A vacancy in the membership of the board shall not impair the rights of a quorum to exercise all the rights and perform all the duties of the authority.

2010 Acts, ch 1116, §6

466B.25 Activities coordination.

In all activities of a watershed management authority, the authority may coordinate its activities with the department of natural resources, the department of agriculture and land stewardship, councils of governments, public drinking water utilities, and soil and water conservation districts.

2010 Acts, ch 1116, §7

SUBCHAPTER III

WATERSHED PLANNING ACTIVITIES

466B.31 Watershed planning advisory council.

1. A watershed planning advisory council is established for purposes of assembling a diverse group of stakeholders to review research and make recommendations to various state entities regarding methods to protect water resources in the state, assure an adequate supply of water, mitigate and prevent floods, and coordinate the management of those resources in a sustainable, fiscally responsible, and environmentally responsible manner. The advisory council may seek input from councils of governments or other organizations in the development of its recommendations. The advisory council shall meet once a year and at other times as deemed necessary to meet the requirements of this section. The advisory council may appoint a task force to assist the advisory council in completing its duties.

2. The watershed planning advisory council shall consist of all of the following members:

- a. The voting members of the advisory council shall include all of the following:
 - (1) One member selected by the Iowa association of municipal utilities.
 - (2) One member selected by the Iowa league of cities.
 - (3) One member selected by the Iowa association of business and industry.
 - (4) One member selected by the Iowa water pollution control association.
 - (5) One member selected by the Iowa rural water association.
 - (6) One member selected by growing green communities.
 - (7) One member selected by the Iowa environmental council.
 - (8) One member selected by the Iowa farm bureau federation.
 - (9) One member selected by the Iowa corn growers association.
 - (10) One member selected by the Iowa soybean association.
 - (11) One member selected by the Iowa pork producers council.
 - (12) One member selected by the soil and water conservation districts of Iowa.
 - (13) One person representing the department of agriculture and land stewardship selected by the secretary of agriculture.
 - (14) One person representing the department of natural resources selected by the director.
 - (15) Two members selected by the Iowa conservation alliance.
 - (16) One member selected by the Iowa drainage district association.

(17) One member selected by the agribusiness association of Iowa.

(18) One member selected by the Iowa floodplain and stormwater management association.

(19) One member selected by Iowa rivers revival.

b. The nonvoting members of the advisory council shall include all of the following:

(1) Two members of the senate. One senator shall be appointed by the majority leader of the senate and one senator shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate.

(2) Two members of the house of representatives. One member shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives.

3. By December 1 of each year, the watershed planning advisory council shall submit a report to the governor, the general assembly, the department of agriculture and land stewardship, the department of natural resources, and the water resources coordinating council. The report shall include recommendations regarding all of the following:

a. Improving water quality and optimizing the costs of voluntarily achieving and maintaining water quality standards.

b. Creating economic incentives for voluntary nonpoint source load reductions, point source discharge reductions beyond those required by the federal Water Pollution Control Act, implementation of pollution prevention programs, wetland restoration and creation, and the development of emerging pollution control technologies.

c. Facilitating the implementation of total maximum daily loads, urban storm water control programs, and nonpoint source management practices required or authorized under the federal Water Pollution Control Act. This paragraph shall not be construed to obviate the requirement to develop a total maximum daily load for waters that do not meet water quality standards as required by section 303(d) of the federal Water Pollution Control Act or to delay implementation of a total maximum daily load that has been approved by the department and the director.

d. Providing incentives, methods, and practices for the development of new and more accurate and reliable pollution control quantification protocols and procedures, including but not limited to development of policy based on information and data that is publicly available and that can be verified and evaluated.

e. Providing greater flexibility for broader public involvement through community-based, nonregulatory, and performance-driven watershed management planning.

f. Assigning responsibility for monitoring flood risk, flood mitigation, and coordination with federal agencies.

g. Involving cities, counties, and other local and regional public and private entities in watershed improvement including but not limited to incentives for participation in a watershed management authority created under this chapter.

4. Each year, the voting members of the advisory council shall designate one voting member as chairperson.

2010 Acts, ch 1116, §1; 2011 Acts, ch 131, §98, 158

466B.32 Watershed demonstration pilot projects.

The department of natural resources and the department of agriculture and land stewardship, in collaboration with the United States department of agriculture's natural resources conservation service and the Iowa flood center established pursuant to section 466C.1, and in cooperation with the council, shall seek funding to plan, implement, and monitor one or more watershed demonstration pilot projects for urban and rural areas involving a twelve-digit hydrologic unit code subwatershed as defined by the United States geological survey. The pilot projects shall include features that seek to do all of the following:

1. Maximize soil water holding capacity from precipitation.

2. Minimize severe scour erosion and sand deposition during floods.

3. Manage water runoff in uplands under saturated soil moisture conditions.

4. Reduce and mitigate structural and nonstructural flood damage.

2010 Acts, ch 1116, §2