

Fiscal TOPICS

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Watershed Improvement Review Program

Purpose and History

The Watershed Improvement Review Program was established during the 2005 Legislative Session. The legislation created the Watershed Improvement Review Board as well as the Watershed Improvement Fund for Watershed Improvement Grants. The purpose of the Board is to review applications and award grants for projects that will provide for the following:

- Enhancing the state's water quality by implementing locally controlled projects to improve impaired watersheds.
- Improving the state's water resources for the purposes of drinking, agriculture, recreation, sports, and economic development.
- Encouraging public participation and input for determining priorities to improve water quality.

The above includes projects related to agricultural runoff and drainage, stream bank erosion, municipal discharge, stormwater runoff, unsewered communities, industrial discharge, and livestock runoff.

The 15 Board members are appointed by the Governor and include representatives from agriculture groups, drinking water and wastewater utilities, environmental organizations, agribusiness, and conservation organizations. The Board also includes four nonvoting members representing the General Assembly, two from the Senate and two from the House.

The Fund is held by the Treasurer of State, and the Program is administered by the Soil Conservation Division of the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The legislation permits the Department to receive 1.0% of the funds appropriated each fiscal year to the Watershed Improvement Fund, or \$50,000, whichever is less, to pay for administrative support. In addition, [SF 509](#) (FY 2012 Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Act) requires fines collected from violations of the Animal Agriculture Act to be deposited in the Watershed Improvement Fund.

Funding History

- FY 2006: \$5.0 million appropriated from the Underground Storage Tank Fund.
- FY 2007: \$5.0 million appropriated from the Endowment for Iowa's Health Restricted Capitals Fund.
- FY 2008-FY 2010: \$5.0 million appropriated each year from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF).
- FY 2011: \$2.0 million appropriated from the Revenue Bonds Capitals II Fund.
- FY 2012: No funding.
- FY 2013: \$1.0 million appropriated from the RIIF and \$3.0 million appropriated from the General Fund in accordance with [HF 648](#) (FY 2013 Bond Repayment and Supplemental Appropriations Act).
- FY 2014: \$1.5 million appropriated from the General Fund in [SF 2363](#) (FY 2014 Bond Defeasement and Supplemental Appropriations Bill); however, the Governor vetoed the bill.
- FY 2015: No funding.
- FY 2016: No funding.
- FY 2017: No funding, and [HF 2454](#) (FY 2017 Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Act) specified that no new grants could be awarded.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapter [466A](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [27.105](#), [27.106](#)

More Information

Watershed Improvement Review Board: <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/IWIRB.asp>

Iowa General Assembly: <http://www.legis.iowa.gov/index.aspx>

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