



Telephone: (517) 373-5383 Fex: (517) 373-1986 TDD: (517) 373-0543

House Bill 5194 (as passed by the House) Sponsor: Representative Dale Sheltrown

House Committee: Conservation and Outdoor Recreation

Senate Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Completed: 3-8-04

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 93 (Soil Conservation Districts) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to permit a resident of a conservation district unable to attend the district's annual meeting to vote by mail for conservation district directors.

Currently, a person unable to attend the annual meeting may vote for district directors at the conservation district office during regular business hours any time after the official notice of the annual meeting and before the annual meeting. The bill also would permit a person to vote by mail during the same time period.

MCL 324.9307

BACKGROUND

Part 93 provides for conservation districts (formerly called soil conservation districts) and requires a district board to consist of five directors. Directors are elected at an annual meeting by residents of the district at large, on a date determined by the board. Conservation districts consist of one or two counties, and are responsible for reporting to the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Conservation districts engage in a variety of activities, such as conducting research, surveys and investigations; making available agricultural and engineering equipment and machinery, as well as fertilizer, seeds, and seedlings, to assist landowners to carry out conservation programs and erosion prevention; developing plans for the conservation of farmland and natural resources; administering conservation programs; and managing farmland and natural resource conservation projects.

Legislative Analyst: Claire Layman

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State government. Local conservation districts would incur the cost of printing and mailing absentee ballots for the election of district directors. The cost would depend on the number of absentee ballots requested.

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.