



## Support local conservation through SWCD Aid: HF 3719/SF3913

The **Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD)** provides a collaborative, centralized voice for Minnesota’s 88 soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs). SWCDs are local units of government comprised of elected, nonpartisan supervisors who are passionate about conserving Minnesota’s remarkable natural resources. **We are asking legislators to support a standing, statutory appropriation for SWCDs through the Department of Revenue – SWCD Aid – at \$22 million per year.**

### SWCDs help conserve natural resources across Minnesota

SWCDs provide value to our state’s conservation through technical assistance, funding and educational services for private landowners. They are a primary source of conservation information, support, and program management for landowners and other local units of government.

SWCDs are the technical experts and “boots on the ground” who understand their specific communities’ needs and help landowners navigate conservation programs from start to finish. As water quality and soil health issues are prioritized in Minnesota, SWCDs’ roles have expanded and now include helping landowners navigate laws and programs that are increasing in complexity.

### Seeking a permanent funding solution

For several years, policymakers have expressed a need to permanently fund soil and water conservation capacity. Current funding arrangements have allowed this important work to continue while we worked toward a general fund solution.

**If Minnesota wants to increase its pace of progress toward clean water and healthy soil goals, it needs to find an adequate, permanent funding solution for SWCDs.**

The state’s projected \$9.25 billion surplus for the current biennium and improved economic outlook for future years presents the opportune time for lawmakers to establish SWCD funding as a standing, statutory, general fund appropriation of \$22 million per year through the Department of Revenue – SWCD Aid.

This funding would boost SWCD capacity, enhance SWCDs’ ability to hire and retain qualified, credentialed employees, and increase our pace of progress toward clean water and healthy soil goals. It would increase our ability to leverage federal conservation program dollars and allow SWCDs the ability to plan for the future. We urge legislators to support SWCD Aid at the amount of \$22 million per year.





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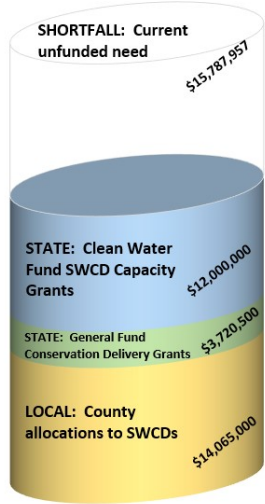
## Addressing SWCDs' chronically unmet funding needs

Statewide funding totals for SWCDs currently leave us short by over \$15 million per year. Each SWCD's funding shortfall presents unique challenges to their delivery of programs and services.

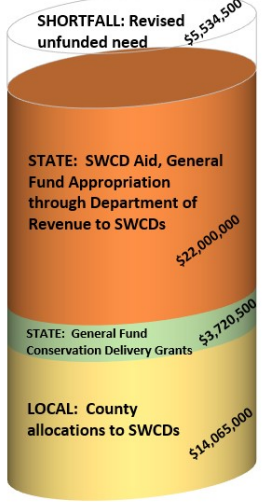
Those services include planning and reporting efforts, providing technical expertise in a variety of natural resource areas, administering projects and programs, and cooperating with and leveraging the financial and technical resources of our federal partners, to name a few.

A state investment in SWCD Aid of \$22 million per year will help address our chronic funding shortfall and build SWCD capacity statewide.

FISCAL YEAR 2020 SWCD FUNDING



PROPOSED ANNUAL SWCD FUNDING



**TOTAL: \$45,320,000**  
annual cost of operating SWCDs at full capacity

**SWCDs are nimble, local and efficient partners who are experts at what they do and have earned the trust of landowners through years of partnership.**

## Cooperating and leveraging

SWCDs successfully leverage resources from a variety of local, state, national and private sources to complete projects across the state, as prioritized by their local communities.

Without adequate funding for SWCDs, thousands of available federal and private dollars cannot be committed to important projects. Staffing at our partner agency, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, is limited, and SWCD capacity is critical in helping deliver and leverage federal conservation program dollars.

