

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Alaska Association of Conservation****Federal Tax ID: 92-0161947****Districts****Project Title:****Project Type: Other**

# Alaska Association of Conservation Districts - Conservation Projects

**State Funding Requested: \$500,000****House District: Statewide (1-40)**

Future Funding May Be Requested

**Brief Project Description:**

Provide the technical guidance and assistance and carry out the measures for soil conservation and erosion control.
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**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$500,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2012 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$500,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) serve an important role in our state by assisting landowners with natural resource management. Across the state SWCDs help landowners develop their land responsibly, while taking into consideration such issues as air quality, soil degradation and erosion, water quality, and forestry management. Thousands of personal contacts with landowners are made each year in districts around the state.

Other key programs include soil nutrient testing, technical assistance for invasive plant management, assistance for farmers, forestry management plans, promotion of Alaska Grown products, and resource education to local schools. Districts conduct land capability surveys and investigations of potential agricultural areas and soil conservation and erosion control. Make technical guidance and other assistance available while carrying out the measures for soil conservation and erosion control. Construct, improve and maintain soil erosion control and conservation structures. Local districts work with numerous agencies, organizations, local government, and private citizens to deliver our programs. Working cooperatively within the community helps the district to be well informed and provide services that are useful and timely.

They provide a report on activities to the Natural Resources Conservation Development Board that in turn advises the Governor Commissioner of DNR, and the Alaska State Legislature. All reports are distributed by the 30th day of the legislative session.

The Alaska Association of Conservation Districts has leveraged thousands of dollars for natural resource projects from federal and local sources, but cannot deliver these projects statewide unless they have funding for base operations. Usually the match is 6 to 1 on the funding for districts.

For more information please see the web site:

<http://www.alaskaconservationdistricts.org/>

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/swcdb/swcdb.htm>

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/pic/fact097.htm>

**Project Timeline:**

FY 2012 - projects will start upon receipt of funding.

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

Alaska Association of Conservation Districts

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

Name: Steve Hicks  
Title: Chief Administration Officer  
Address: 1700 E. Bogard Road, Ste 203A  
Wasilla , Alaska 99654  
Phone Number: (907)373-7923  
Email: aacd@mtaonline.net

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority?  Yes  No

## **What is a Soil and Water Conservation District?**

Districts are state-authorized entities with authority to exercise the powers delegated by the Commissioner as provided in AS 41.10.130. Each district is organized by the Commissioner and governed by a five-member board of supervisors. Each district is assisted by the NRCDB.

As provided by AS 41.10.110, the DNR Commissioner is authorized to create districts in the state and delegate to the district supervisors of each district such powers as the Commissioner considers necessary to accomplish the purposes of soil and water conservation. The following powers have been delegated by the Commissioner to the district supervisors of each district:

- conduct land capability surveys and investigations of potential agricultural areas and of soil conservation and erosion control, including necessary preventative and control measures, in the state; to publish the results of these surveys and investigations and to disseminate information concerning the results of the surveys and investigations to prospective settlers and the general public;
- make technical guidance and other assistance available to settlers of new land to assure the development of the land in a manner that will permit it to be used in accordance with its capabilities and treated in accordance with its needs;
- carry out measures for soil conservation and erosion control within the state, including engineering operations, methods of cultivation, the growing of vegetation, and changes in use of land, with the consent and cooperation of the land user or agency having jurisdiction of the land;
- cooperate with, furnish assistance to, and enter into agreements with, a user of land or agency within the state;
- construct, improve and maintain soil erosion control and conservation structures as are necessary and practical for carrying out the purpose of this chapter;
- develop comprehensive plans for the conservation of soil and control of soil erosion within the state, cropping programs, tillage practices and changes in land use, and publish plans and information and bring them to the attention of users of land within the state;
- accept contributions in money, services, materials or equipment from the U.S. or its agencies, from an agency of the state and from any other sources for use in carrying out the purposes set forth in this chapter.

## History

The state of the nation's soil resources during the 1930's, a decade known as the Dust Bowl Era, inspired the establishment of soil and water conservation districts across the nation. When farm families arrived in the Great Plains states, such as Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Colorado, they altered the landscape to suit their needs. These changes included replacing native grasses with agricultural crops and allowing cattle to graze on grounds less suitable for cultivation. When the U.S. entered World War I, the great demand for wheat to feed U.S. troops increased the conversion of even less appropriate land to agricultural use. In addition, the introduction of modern farm equipment allowed farmers to plow more land.

Such intensive manipulation of the land without conservation practices amplified the effects of the natural drought cycle on the Great Plains states. Crop vegetation, unlike indigenous plants, was not well suited for drought conditions. During the late 1920's and early 1930's widespread crop failure decreased ground cover. In addition, many farmers converted unsuccessful cropland to grazing land, where cattle trampled the already poor quality soil and thwarted ground cover renewal. The strong plains winds blew away unprotected topsoil.

By the mid 1930's large dust storms were a common event across the Great Plains area that became known as The Dust Bowl. Displaced farming families migrated west to California in search of work and land. The once highly productive Great Plains reached a state of economic and ecological devastation.

In 1935, Congress made soil and water conservation a national priority by passing the Soil Conservation Act. This act established the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), then called the Soil Conservation Service.

In 1937, President Roosevelt drafted a special recommendation to each state governor for the formation of local soil conservation programs. He suggested that the programs work on the local level directly with land owners. In 1937, North Carolina established the first soil conservation district, a precursor to soil and water conservation districts, in the Brown Creek Watershed.

The tone of the legislation is that of a volunteer, grass-roots organization which could function only with the permission of the land user. The original Territorial statutes and organization remained essentially unchanged when Alaska became a state in 1959. It was not until 1983 that many changes to the statutes were made. In 1983, the state was investing significant funds in agriculture. The changes established a statewide board (NRCDB) with regional representation and changed the land occupier to land user (an individual who produces renewable resources and has a current cooperative agreement).

The AACD was organized in 1965 to help the Alaska districts do cooperatively what they could not do independently. In 1998, AACD incorporated with 501(c)(3) status.

### Number of Districts

Today, there are approximately 3,000 soil and water conservation districts nationwide, whose boundaries encompass 98 percent of the privately-owned land in the 50 states. Considering that 70 percent of land in the U.S. is in private ownership, the role of local SWCD in natural resource management is quite significant.

In Alaska, there are currently 12 organized districts as listed below. With the exception of the Alaska SWCD (Alaska District), each district is governed by five land users from the district that serve three-year, uncompensated terms of office. The Alaska District encompasses the area outside of the 11 locally organized districts and is governed by the NRCDB. District boards, with area-wide input from landowners and resource user groups, establish annual and long-term conservation priorities for their districts. It is through these locally led planning efforts that state and federal programs are directed.

<b>SWCD</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>SWCD</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Alaska	331,298,200	Kodiak	3,134,209
Anchorage	1,251,640	Palmer	1,572,804
Fairbanks	3,218,856	Salcha Delta	2,493,650
Homer	1,048,636	Upper Susitna	1,707,746
Kenai	298,430	Wasilla	2,493,650
Kenny Lake	206,522	Yukon Kuskokwim	9,793,700

A map of Alaska districts can be located on-line at [http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/swcdb/documents/ops\\_apdx\\_e\\_districtsmap.pdf](http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/swcdb/documents/ops_apdx_e_districtsmap.pdf).

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

☐ 550 WEST 7<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, SUITE 1400  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-3650  
PHONE: (907) 269-8431  
FAX: (907) 269-8918

March 5, 2009

The Honorable Charlie Huggins  
Alaska State Senator  
State Capitol, Room 119  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD)

Dear Senator Huggins:

In response to your letter of February 24<sup>th</sup> in which you asked for the Department's rationale in discontinuing support of the AACD, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has not provided funding in the past to AACD. While we do not dispute that the conservation work performed by AACD and the SWCDs is important, as a non-profit corporation AACD is not eligible to receive base operating funds as a budget component of DNR. Please allow me to explain our reasoning further.

Historically the majority of funding for the SWCDs and AACD has been federal funding. The most recent source of the federal funding was provided by Senator Ted Stevens who secured an earmark of roughly \$3.9 million in 2003 to directly benefit the SWCDs. Currently, there is approximately \$650,000 left of that earmark; it is available to the districts through the programs offered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Some districts have found it difficult to take advantage of the funds because of the strict reporting structure and level of financial accountability required by NRCS. While NRCS staff spends countless hours working directly with AACD and district staff to assist them in satisfying the necessary reporting requirements to make funding available, the level of financial accountability currently seems unattainable by AACD. A recent letter from NRCS to AACD regarding financial accountability is attached for your information. A Federal Omnibus Appropriations Bill recently passed which included \$864,000 for AACD.

DNR provides \$2,000 per year directly to each district through a cooperative agreement to assist them in paying AACD dues and dues to the National Association of Conservation Districts. The \$2,000 is part of the Natural Resources Conservation and Development Board budget within DNR. AACD is not a party to this cooperative agreement.

AACD has secured grants through the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development (DCCED) for the past two fiscal years. Aside from these grants through DCCED,

*"Develop, Conserve, and Enhance Natural Resources for Present and Future Alaskans"*

Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD)

March 5, 2009

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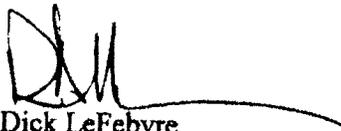
AACD has not received any state funding for operations that we are aware of. AACD has never been funded through DNR as a standing component in our operating budget.

The NRCDB is working with the districts currently to assemble a funding request proposal for FY 2011 which will include project proposals from all twelve districts. DNR is not opposed to including the proposal, once assembled appropriately, in the department's capital budget request but the current economic climate is not amenable to the addition of operating funds for the SWCDs into DNR's budget. Complications are associated with DNR providing operating funds to the districts including whether or not the district employees would be considered state employees as well as audit and reporting requirements. Funding on a project-by-project basis in a grant format would seem to be the best solution for the time being.

A draft memorandum of understanding and long-range strategic program plan between DNR, AACD, and NRCS is progressing forward to provide a solid framework for an improved working relationship between our three entities and a foundation for future funding opportunities for the SWCDs. We are working to improve the stability of the SWCDs by first defining the roles and responsibilities of each agency involved and assisting them in acting collectively as the AACD to be more successful in securing stable funding sources. The long-range strategic program plan is intended to focus the SWCDs projects and assist them in structuring their annual work plans with the intent of reaching their long term conservation goals. With a 5-year long-range plan in place, the SWCDs would be better outfitted to apply for and receive grant funds from all sources.

In short, DNR is not opposed to AACD receiving state funding for operations but would caution that financial accountability has been an issue in the past and could continue to be a hurdle for the association. For the most benefit to SWCDs, funding should be awarded on a project-by-project basis with clear deliverables and progress that can be measured accordingly. Please be assured that we are aware of the SWCDs funding situation and are working to improve it long term. If you should have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dick LeFebvre  
Deputy Commissioner

cc: NRCDB  
Bob Jones, State Conservationist, NRCS  
Ken Marsh, President, AACD

The Honorable Charlie Huggins  
600 E. Railroad Avenue  
Wasilla, AK 99654 State Capitol, Room

DEC 16 2009

Re: Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District (WSWCD)  
Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD)

Dear Senator Huggins:

December 14, 2009

I would like to thank you for your 2/24/09 letter to DNR Commissioner Irwin regarding operational funding for Alaska Soil and Water Conservation Districts (ASWCD). There are a number of funding issues regarding ASWCD. I would like to discuss these issues with you before you go to Juneau for the 2010 session.

Unfortunately the statutory role of ASWCD is not well known within the legislature or even in DNR. Districts have found at the Department level most State admin staff link us to DEC. We must stress districts are not part of that enforcement Department. Districts practice conservation and resource development from a very different point of view.

I don't want to bore you with my personal participation with ASWCDs and the AACD but my experience is just an example of how many of "us old timers" view this funding situation. I became a cooperator in the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District (WSWCD) in 1977. Since that date I have been a Wasilla District Supervisor, elected to be the District chairman several times. I represented the District on the Mat-Su Borough Agriculture and Forestry Advisory Board. I represented the district in the process to start the Mat-Su Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) and currently am the WSWCD representative on that council. In 1995 Governor Knowles appointed me to the Alaska Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board (ANRCDB). Members of that board elected me to serve as its chairman for several years. I served on that board until 2005. In 2007 Mayor Curtis Menard nominated me to serve as a commissioner on the Mat Su Borough Planning Commission and was approved by the assembly. Many of us "old timers" have over a 30 year history putting our vision of conservation on the ground and being volunteers in our local Conservation Districts, the AACD as well as other conservation groups and activities in our communities.

**I do believe you and the legislature should have sufficient background information to understand why districts are coming directly to the legislature for funding.** Many sources of funding available to districts only allow allocation of their funds for work on the ground and none for what is considered admin. In order to facilitate and expand our ability to receive funding from those sources (as authorized by AS 41.10.110) districts formed the AACD a 501c3 nonprofit and set it up to carry out accounting and personnel management system. All of our conservation activities with land owners are based upon their volunteering to cooperate with districts conservation practices. WSWCD would welcome the opportunity to tell our state as well as our national history to members of your staff and the legislature.

The LeFebver letter of 3/5/09 is an attempt to divert attention of our state problem and sidetrack attention to his perception of our federal problem. His being referenced to the Federal Omnibus Appropriations Bill by NRCS clearly emphasizes his and DNR total misunderstanding of that situation. Each District must evaluate which funding sources will best meet our cooperators and community needs. Our state statutory responsibilities determine which funding source is most appropriate as opposed to meeting NRCS program goal. I would like to fully address that funding situation however it would require an epistle covering the ongoing problems with NRCS handling of the Stevens earmarks starting in 1999 through 2009. We can provide comments from individuals that received those "countless hours" working with NRCS staff. Since 2000 the Stevens earmark has exceeded \$300,000 which triggers a federal requirement to provide the granting agency with a "Single Audit" This has been done with each earmark. Unless you would need further clarification of that situation districts would suggest our discussion with you should focus on our continued difficulty in obtaining State funding.

Since the Assistant Attorney General Marie Sansone 2/12/1992 opinion "finding districts to be state agencies" Districts have assumed DNR administration would figure out how to provide our funding. Mr. LeFebver pointed out in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph of his letter one method currently used to provide each district with \$2,000. DNR reluctance to include district funding in their budgets seems to date back to the old "area plans" days. Districts through out the state were adamant in our insistence of land being classified in keeping with Sec. 41.10.010 "*to provide for the development and conservation of this land in accordance with its capabilities*". Districts statewide were adamant in our "point of view" and commitment to the responsibilities delegated in AS 41.10. Our experience over the years leads us to the conclusion DNR, Administration and OMB just does not want districts funded. Districts have never received information as to why our funding requests were turned down just that they never went beyond DNR however this year a very controversial capitol projects request by districts was apparently dumped by OMB. Evidently Senator the legislature is the only authority that can determine a method of district funding.

Mr. LeFebver is correct in that Districts have received grants through a number of other state and federal agencies. Some of which were directed through AACD by the districts. This was done to avail us to their administrative and audit capabilities. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) informs us that we are the only districts in the US that do not have ability to acquire funding through taxes or other assessments. We have never been asked to take part in the DNR budget process or to justify our needs before legislative budget committees.

The last paragraph of Mr. LeFebbers letter clearly illustrates how little he and DNR staff understand the intent of Senator Stevens earmark. The intent language detailed exactly how the funding was to be used by districts enabling us to carry out the responsibilities described in the state statute. The Districts 2000 Spring Meeting was devoted to determining which state or federal entity could best deliver the Stevens earmark. The language of the Stevens earmark is in the congressional record. Utilization of the earmark and the employee situation was thoroughly discussed over our three day spring meeting.

The final decisions were ratified at the business meeting on April 12 2000 with Steffin Fechter Management Team Manager NRCS/ USDA and DNR Chief Fiscal Services Officer Nico Bus and received their approval. Also attending were Denice Egan, Ted Stevens office, Anchorage, AK and Bill Sorrell Don Youngs office, Anchorage, AK

Being a 30 year retired state employee I would submit the alleged AACD financial accounting issues are no different than those experienced by any state agency. The memorandum of understanding mentioned is just another in a list districts have signed over the years I have been involve. Over the years new people at DNR attempt to reinterpret the statute, the last memorandum, department orders and insist wording is inconsistent with their view. Districts have functioned under this statute since 1962. We have been able to work out the perceived problems with the individuals who moved through DNR. As I have stated those of us that labored to craft and signed those memorandum are still here and have not changed our definition or intent of the verbiage. With each personnel turnover we have to re-educate and stress past practices.

Enclosed:

3/05/09 Letter from Dick LeFebvre

WSWCD Annual Report of Accomplishments

Chapter 10 Soil and Water Conservation

(5) "stratigraphic test well" means a well that is not intended to encounter an oil or gas accumulation and that is drilled to a sufficient depth to measure the geological, geophysical, and engineering parameters used for determining an area's oil and gas potential. (§ 1 ch 39 SLA 1994)

**Revisor's notes.** — Enacted as AS 41.09.190. Re-numbered in 1994.

## Chapter 10. Soil and Water Conservation.

### Section

- 10. Declaration of policy
- 30. Purpose of chapter
- 40. Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board
- 45. Executive director
- 50. Appointment
- 60. Qualifications of board members
- 65. Major land areas of the state
- 70. Term of office

### Section

- 75. Board meetings
- 80. Vacancies
- 90. Compensation and per diem
- 100. Duties of board
- 110. Powers of commissioner
- 120. Approval of land user
- 130. Creation and boundaries of soil and water conservation districts
- 140. Definitions

**Collateral references.** — 3 Am. Jur. 2d. Agriculture, §§ 19, 25, 36-41.  
 3 C.J.S., Agriculture, §§ 3, 5-7.  
 Measure of damages for wrongful removal of earth, sand, or gravel from land. 1 ALR3d 801.

Prohibiting or regulating removal or exploitation of oil and gas, minerals, soil, or other natural products within municipal limits. 10 ALR3d 1226.  
 Liability for diversion of surface water by raising surface level of land. 88 ALR4th 891.

**Sec. 41.10.010. Declaration of policy.** The farm, forest, and grazing land of the state is a basic asset of the state. It is the policy of this chapter, in the interest of the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the state, to provide for the development, use, and conservation of this land in accordance with its capabilities. (§ 47-4-2 ACLA 1949)

*Sec. 41.10.020. Creation and boundaries of soil conservation district. [Repealed, § 14, ch 69 SLA 1983.]*

**Sec. 41.10.030. Purpose of chapter.** The purpose of this chapter is to provide for the orderly development of land, for guiding settlement, and for conserving soil and water and soil resources and controlling and preventing soil erosion. (§ 47-4-3 ACLA 1949; am § 1 ch 69 SLA 1983)

**Sec. 41.10.040. Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board.** The Alaska Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board is composed of five members. The commissioner or, in the absence of the commissioner, the director of agriculture, serves ex officio but without a vote on the board. (§ 47-4-4 ACLA 1949; am § 1 ch 82 SLA 1960; am § 2 ch 69 SLA 1983; am § 1 ch 127 SLA 1996)

**Effect of amendments.** — The 1996 amendment, effective October 1, 1996, substituted "Alaska Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board" for "Alaska Soil and Water Conservation Board."

**Sec. 41.10.045. Executive director.** The commissioner shall appoint an executive director and clerical staff to assist the board. (§ 3 ch 69 SLA 1983)

**Sec. 41.10.050. Appointment.** The governor shall appoint members of the board subject to confirmation by a majority of the members of the legislature in joint session. (§ 47-4-4 ACLA 1949; am § 1 ch 82 SLA 1960)

disseminate information concerning the results of the surveys and investigations to prospective settlers and the general public;

(2) make technical guidance and other assistance available to settlers of new land to assure the development of the land in a manner that will permit it to be used in accordance with its capabilities and treated in accordance with its needs;

(3) carry out measures for soil conservation and erosion control within the state, including engineering operations, methods of cultivation, the growing of vegetation, and changes in use of land, with the consent and cooperation of the land user or agency having jurisdiction of the land;

(4) cooperate with, furnish assistance to, and enter into agreements with, a user of land or agency within the state;

(5) construct, improve, and maintain soil erosion control and conservation structures as are necessary and practical for carrying out the purposes of this chapter;

(6) develop comprehensive plans for the conservation of soil and control of soil erosion within the state, cropping programs, tillage practices and changes in land use, and publish plans and information and bring them to the attention of users of land within the state;

(7) accept contributions in money, services, materials, or equipment from the United States or its agencies, from an agency of the state, and from any other source, for use in carrying out the purposes of this chapter. (§ 47-4-5(1 — 7) ACLA 1949; am §§ 2, 3 ch 82 SLA 1960; am § 10 ch 69 SLA 1983)

**Sec. 41.10.120. Approval of land user.** A survey, investigation or plan for land may not be undertaken by the commissioner and measures for soil conservation and erosion control may not be carried out without the prior approval of the user of the land. (§ 47-4-5(8) ACLA 1949; am § 11 ch 69 SLA 1983)

**Sec. 41.10.130. Creation and boundaries of soil and water conservation districts.** (a) The commissioner may, on the recommendation of the board, create soil and water conservation districts in the state upon petition signed by 25 or more land users setting out the proposed boundaries of the proposed district. The commissioner shall fix a time for and give notice of a public hearing based on the petition at a convenient location or locations within the boundaries of the proposed district. The commissioner may fix the boundaries of the district created, supervise the election of, prescribe the duties of, and install a governing body of five land users to be known as district supervisors for each district created, and delegate to the district supervisors powers as the commissioner considers necessary to accomplish the purposes of this chapter within the district boundaries.

(b) The area of the state that is not located within a district organized under (a) of this section shall be governed by the board. (§ 47-4-5(9) ACLA 1949; am § 3 ch 82 SLA 1960; am §§ 12 ch 69 SLA 1983)

**Sec. 41.10.140. Definitions.** In this chapter

(1) "board" means the Alaska Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board;

(2) "land user" or "user of land" means a person who

(A) is a producer of renewable resources, including farming and forestry; and

(B) has a current cooperative agreement with a soil and water conservation district.

(§ 47-4-5(9) ACLA 1949; am § 3 ch 82 SLA 1960; am § 13 ch 69 SLA 1983; am § 2 ch 127 SLA 1996)

**Cross references.** — For additional definitions, see AS 41.99.900.

**Effect of amendments.** — The 1996 amendment, effective October 1, 1996, substituted "Alaska Natural

Resource Conservation and Development Board" for "Alaska Soil and Water Conservation Board" in paragraph (1).

**From:** Darcy Etcheverry [<mailto:darcyetcheverry@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, April 14, 2011 3:18 PM

**To:** Sen. Joe Paskvan; Sen. Joe Thomas; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Albert Kookesh; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. Tammie Wilson; Rep. David Guttenberg; Rep. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Bert Stedman; Rep. Bill Stoltze

**Subject:** Request for Soil & Water Conservation District Funding!

Dear Senators and Representatives:

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) serve an important role in our state by assisting landowners with natural resource management. Across the state SWCDs help landowners develop their land responsibly, while taking into consideration such issues as air quality, soil degradation and erosion, water quality, and forestry management. Thousands of personal contacts with landowners are made each year in districts around the state.

Within the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District, key programs include soil nutrient testing, technical assistance for invasive plant management, assistance for farmers, forestry management plans, promotion of Alaska Grown products, and resource education to local schools. Our local district works with numerous agencies, organizations, local government, and private citizens to deliver our programs. Working cooperatively within the community helps the district to be well informed and provide services that are useful and timely.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the state are in risk of losing vital funding from the State of Alaska. Please consider changing the current \$50,000 appropriation to \$500,000 for the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (TPS-56870V1), which is needed for Alaska's 12 soil and water conservation districts to operate this year. The Alaska Association of Conservation Districts has leveraged thousands of dollars for natural resource projects from federal and local sources, but cannot deliver these projects statewide unless they have funding for base operations.

Thank you very much for funding Alaska's Soil and Water Conservation Districts so that each may continue their good work!

Sincerely,

Darcy Etcheverry  
4900 Eielson Farm Rd  
North Pole, Alaska 99705  
[darcyetcheverry@gmail.com](mailto:darcyetcheverry@gmail.com)  
[\(907\) 750-7926](tel:(907)750-7926)