



## KENTUCKY'S 121 CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

### 2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- **Thank Legislators for restoring the Direct Aid funding for Conservation Districts**
  1. This money is appropriated to the conservation districts to assist in carrying out their statutory authority.
  2. Direct Aid funds match local funds in hiring needed technical and administrative staff to assist the citizens in each county to address conservation and environmental issues.
  3. This money helps districts maintain office space in each county, especially those who no longer have a NRCS office in their county.
  4. Direct Aid provides the ability to administrate local programs in every county in the Commonwealth, such as, Fallen Animal Pickup, metal recycling, educational programs, farm field days, Art and Essay competition on selected environmental topics which are different each year, sponsoring Envirothon competition, and funding Mobile Science Activity Center in county school systems. (Local conservation districts could give more specific examples.)
  5. This allows districts to provide additional financial assistance to landowners to address conservation concerns and address other environmental concerns in their communities. (Fallen Animal Pickup, Metal Recycling, etc.)
  6. These monies roll over more than six times in the local communities.
- **Continuing to have a Conservation District presence in all 120 counties in Kentucky.**
  1. By having a Conservation District in each of the 120 Counties every citizen in the state has equal opportunity to utilize state and federal programs at a local office.
  2. Conservation programs operate best with grassroots locally led leadership. Conservation Districts are the gateway in each county to educate and work one on one with local landowners.
  3. More than 30 Conservation Districts administer and deliver the Tobacco Settlement Fund “County Agricultural Investment Program” (CAIP) to local agricultural producers.
- **Any Changes to Kentucky Revised Statutes pertaining to Conservation Districts (KRS 262 & KRS 146) should strengthen Conservation Districts.**
  1. Priority to restore financial integrity and review of Conservation Districts by the KY Soil and Water Conservation Commission.
  2. Oversight from KY Soil and Water Conservation Commission needs to be strengthened to continue transparency of Conservation Districts
  3. In “Ghost Government: A Report on Special Districts in Kentucky” authored by KY State Auditor Adam Edelen on November 14, 2012. Auditor Edelen on page 48, presented as a Case Study the Soil & Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) and Division of Conservation (DOC) Districts In Good Standing (DIGS) Program. It emphasized the work of DOC Field Representatives with districts on a “daily basis”

in developing qualifying factors, and ultimate compliance with the program. KACD supports the hiring of a full staff of Field Representatives to again allow the degree of oversight praised in Auditor Edelen's report.

- **Thank Legislators for the \$5 Million SCS Dollars in 2018 and \$2.5 Million in 2019**
  1. These funds are used to carry out practices to keep producers in compliance with their Ag Water Quality Plans; to reduce soil erosion, decrease nutrient runoff, and to make our streams cleaner.
  2. Also, provide financial assistance to landowners under the "Bad Actor Clause" of the Ag Water Quality Act to carry-out corrective measures to keep them in compliance with the Act.
  3. Clean water affects everyone in The Commonwealth as well as our neighbors downstream on the Mississippi River. It is also essential to enable todays farmers to supply food resources for future increasing populations.
  4. These monies roll over several times in the local communities also as local contractors, seed and fertilizer suppliers, and supply providers are used to carry out these practices.
  5. 2018: 1,238 applications for \$9 million in requests received and these cost share funds are still important in keeping Kentucky agricultural producers in compliance with federal and state environmental rules.

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