

Article 73.

Community Conservation Assistance Program.

§ 106-860. Community Conservation Assistance Program.

(a) Program Established. – There is established the Community Conservation Assistance Program. The Program shall be implemented and supervised by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

(b) Purposes. – The purpose of the Program shall be to reduce the input of nonpoint source pollution into the waters of the State. The Program shall be subject to the following requirements and limitations:

- (1) Subject to subdivision (5) of this subsection, priority designations for inclusion in the Program for State funding shall be established by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. The Soil and Water Conservation Commission shall allocate the cost share and technical assistance funds under the Program.
- (2) Areas shall be included in the Program as the funds are appropriated and technical assistance becomes available from the local Soil and Water Conservation District.
- (3) Funding may be provided to assist community conservation practices approved by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission.
- (4) State funding shall be limited to seventy-five percent (75%) of the average cost for each practice with the assisted applicant providing twenty-five percent (25%) of the cost, which may include in-kind support of the practice, with a maximum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) per year to each applicant.
- (5) Priority designation for inclusion in the Program for State funding shall be given to projects that improve water quality. To be eligible for cost-share funds under this subdivision, a project shall be evaluated before funding is awarded and after the project is completed to determine the impact on water quality.
- (6) Participation in the Program shall be voluntary.

(c) Availability of Funds. – State funds for the Program shall remain available until expended.

(d) Advisory Committee. – The Program shall be reviewed, prior to implementation, by the Community Conservation Assistance Program Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee shall meet quarterly to review the progress of the Program. The Advisory Committee shall consist of the following members:

- (1) The Director of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services or the Director's designee, who shall serve as the Chair of the Advisory Committee.
- (2) The President of the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts or the President's designee.
- (3) The Director of the Cooperative Extension Service at North Carolina State University or the Director's designee.
- (4) The Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners or the Executive Director's designee.
- (5) The Executive Director of the North Carolina League of Municipalities or the Executive Director's designee.
- (6) The State Conservationist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture or the State Conservationist's designee.

- (7) The Executive Director of the Wildlife Resources Commission or the Executive Director's designee.
- (8) The President of the North Carolina Conservation District Employees Association or the President's designee.
- (9) The President of the North Carolina Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils or the President's designee.
- (10) Repealed by Session Laws 2013-413, s. 57(e). For effective date, see note.
- (11) The Assistant Commissioner of the North Carolina Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services or the Assistant Commissioner's designee.
- (12) The Director of the Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources of the Department of Environmental Quality or the Director's designee.
- (13) The Director of the Division of Coastal Management of the Department of Environmental Quality or the Director's designee.
- (14) The Director of the Division of Water Resources of the Department of Environmental Quality or the Director's designee.
- (15) The President of the Carolinas Land Improvement Contractors Association or the President's designee.
- (16) The Extension Administrator of the Cooperative Extension Service at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University or the Extension Administrator's designee.

(e) Report. – The Soil and Water Conservation Commission shall report no later than January 31 of each year to the Environmental Review Commission, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Fiscal Research Division. The report shall include a summary of projects that received State funding pursuant to the Program, the results of the evaluation conducted pursuant to subdivision (5) of subsection (b) of this section, findings regarding the effectiveness of each project to accomplish its primary purpose, and any recommendations to assure that State funding is used in the most cost-effective manner and accomplishes the greatest improvement in water quality. This report shall be submitted to the Environmental Review Commission and the Fiscal Research Division as a part of the report required by G.S. 106-850(e). (2006-78, s. 1; 2011-145, ss. 13.22A(x)-(z), (aa), 13.25(vv), (xx); 2012-143, s. 1(f); 2013-155, s. 10; 2013-413, s. 57(e); 2015-241, s. 14.30(u); 2017-10, s. 4.18(b); 2024-32, s. 18.)