CHAPTER 61-16
CREATION OF WATER RESOURCE DISTRICTS - BOARDS

61-16-01. Definitions.

61-16-02. Petition for establishment of water conservation and flood control district - Hearing thereon and investigation - District when created.

61-16-03. Bond to accompany petition for district - When - Exception.

61-16-04. Resolution of governing body of public corporation filed with commission.

61-16-05. Water resource districts - Area to be included.
All land in North Dakota shall be within a water resource district.

61-16-06. Order creating water resource district.
A certified copy of the order creating a water resource district shall be filed with the county auditor of each county within the district. A like copy of the order shall be filed with the secretary of state. The secretary of state shall issue to the state water commission a certificate, bearing the seal of the state, of the due organization of the district, and shall file a copy of the certificate and the commission's order creating the district. The secretary of state's certificate, or a copy authenticated by the secretary of state, shall be prima facie evidence of the organization of the district. This new district shall be, and is hereby declared to be, a governmental agency, and a body politic and corporate with the authority to exercise the powers specified in this chapter, or which may be reasonably implied to exercise such powers. The commission's order shall specify the name or number by which a district shall be known.

61-16-06.1. Consolidation of water resource districts.
1. Any two or more water resource districts may be consolidated into a single district or existing districts may be adjusted to reflect watershed boundaries, as determined by the state engineer, by filing with the state water commission a petition signed by:
   a. A majority of the members of the board of each of the districts; or
   b. Fifty percent or more of the landowners within each of the districts.
When the petition is filed by the district boards, it must be accompanied by a certified copy of the resolution of the governing boards authorizing the signing of the petition. The petition must contain a detailed plan for the disposition of the property, assets, and liabilities of each of the districts. This plan must be as equitable as practicable to every landowner within the districts and must fully protect creditors and the holders of improvement warrants of the petitioning districts. The plan may provide for a continuance of assessments upon properties in the petitioning districts to retire outstanding obligations, or for the assumption of outstanding obligations and the spreading of assessments for the payment thereof over properties in the newly created district. No petition may be approved by the state water commission unless it fully meets the requirements of this section.
2. The state water commission shall fix a time and place for a public hearing at a site convenient and accessible for a majority of the affected individuals. At least fifteen days prior to the date of hearing, the commission shall publish notice of the hearing in at least one newspaper of general circulation in each of the districts being consolidated or adjusted. Additional notice of the hearing may be given in a manner prescribed by the state water commission.
3. Prior to the hearing, the state engineer shall make, or cause to be made, an investigation of the need for consolidation of the petitioning districts and shall submit a report of the findings to the state water commission. This report must be presented at the petition hearing. If the state water commission finds it is not feasible, desirable, or practical to consolidate the petitioning districts, it shall deny the petition and state the reasons for denial. If, however, the state water commission finds that problems of flood control, watershed development or improvement, drainage, water supply, or other reasons make consolidation or boundary adjustment and establishment of the proposed water resource district desirable, it shall grant the petition and create the district. Upon creation of the new water resource district, the state water commission shall dissolve the included districts or make necessary boundary adjustments to existing districts.

61-16-07. Water resource board - Appointment and number.
When a water resource district has been created, and the state water commission has filed notice with the county auditor of a county where the district or a part thereof is situated, a water resource board shall be appointed within ninety days, as provided herein. If the district's boundaries are confined to one county, the board of county commissioners shall appoint a water resource board consisting of three or five managers. When a district includes two counties, the water resource board shall consist of five managers, three appointed by the board of county commissioners of the county having the larger aggregate taxable valuation of property, and two appointed by the board of county commissioners of the other county. If a district includes three counties, the water resource board shall consist of five managers, one appointed by the board of county commissioners of the county having the lowest aggregate taxable valuation of property in the district, and two appointed by the board of county commissioners of each of the other two counties. If a district includes four or six counties, the water resource board shall consist of two members from the county having the highest aggregate taxable valuation of property in the district, and one manager from each of the other counties. If a district includes five or seven counties, the water resource board shall consist of one manager from each county. Appointments to the water resource board shall be made by the boards of county commissioners of the respective counties.

61-16-08. Eligibility for appointment to board - Term of office - Removal - Filling vacancies - Compensation of managers.
1. When a water resource district has been created, any resident landowner in the district, except a county commissioner, is eligible, subject to the provisions of this section, for appointment to the water resource board. After June 30, 1985, when the term of office of a district manager has expired, the manager's successor shall hold office for three years from the first day of January next following the date of the successor's appointment. The term of office of a manager does not terminate until the successor in office is appointed and qualified. In case the office of any district manager becomes vacant, the manager appointed to fill the vacancy shall serve the unexpired term of the manager whose office became vacant. Within three months after the start of an individual's term as a district manager, the individual shall attend a course on water management, and each district manager shall attend a course on water management every three years during the manager's term.

2. Each member of a water resource board shall receive the sum of at least seventy-five dollars but not more than one hundred thirty-five dollars per day while performing duties as a member of the board, and an allowance for meals and lodging expenses at the same rate and under the same conditions as provided for state officials and employees. The allowance for travel expenses shall be at the same rate as provided by section 11-10-15 and shall be evidenced by a subvoucher or receipt as provided by section 21-05-01.

3. A manager may be removed from the board by the board of county commissioners after it appears to the board of county commissioners by competent evidence, and after a public hearing, if so requested by the manager subject to removal, at which
hearing the manager must be apprised of and allowed ample opportunity to repudiate the evidence, that the manager has been guilty of misconduct, malfeasance, crime in office, neglect of duty in office, habitual drunkenness, gross incompetency, or inability to perform the duties of office for reasons of health.

61-16-08.1. Appointment of alternate board member due to conflict of interest or illness.
When a member of a water resource board has a conflict of interest in a specific issue before the board or is unable to fulfill the duties of a board member because of physical or mental illness, the county commissioners may appoint a person to serve as an alternate to the disqualified board member. If the disqualification is for a conflict of interest, the alternate board member is to serve only for the purpose of deciding the particular issue causing the conflict. If the disqualification is for physical or mental illness, the alternate board member is to be appointed by the county commissioners only for one meeting at a time.

61-16-09. Oath of office - Organization of water resource board - Appointment of employees - Meetings.
Upon receiving notice of appointment as member of the water resource board, such appointee shall take the oath of office prescribed for civil officers. Such oath shall be filed with the secretary of the board. Notice of the appointment of a member or members of a water resource board shall be mailed to the state water commission. Such notice shall state the name and post-office address of each appointee and the date of appointment.

A majority of the managers shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of such business as may come before the board but any number may adjourn a meeting for want of a quorum. The water resource board shall appoint a secretary and treasurer and such other employees as needed for the efficient conduct of the district's business and shall fix their compensation. The offices of secretary and treasurer may be held by the same person. Officers and employees shall hold office at the pleasure of the board.

The board shall provide an office suitable for its use as a meeting place and for conducting the affairs of the district. It shall adopt such rules for transacting the business of the district as it may deem necessary, including the time and place of holding regular meetings of the board. Special meetings may be called by the secretary on order of the chairman of the board or upon written request of two members of the board. Notice of a special meeting shall be mailed to each member of the board at least five days before any such meeting provided, that a special meeting may be held whenever all members of the board are present or consent thereto in writing.

61-16-10. Bonds of treasurer and appointive officers.


61-16-13. District may issue warrants in anticipation of taxes levied to pay current expenses.
61-16-14. County treasurer to collect and remit taxes to district treasurer - Deposit of district funds.


61-16-16. Commission and board of commissioners shall encourage construction of dams and other water control devices.

61-16-17. Dams constructed within a district shall come under control of board of commissioners.

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