



Conservation District Enabling Legislation 57 U.S. State & Territory Research and [Survey](#)

Survey, database, and analysis of the enabling legislation of conservation districts across the country.

A joint initiative between the White River Natural Resources Conservation District (WR NRCD), VT Association of Conservation Districts (VACD), National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), and Vermont Law and Graduate School’s Center for Agriculture & Food Systems, funded by the USDA National Agricultural Library and NACD.

Project Scope & Timeline

We are comparing each of the 57 U.S. states and territories’ Conservation District laws against the [original draft state Soil Conservation Act](#) language, distributed by the White House and USDA in 1937.

We are building a searchable database of the most updated versions of each law that will be available to CD Supervisors, State/Territory Associations, and State Conservation Associations across the country for edification and comparison purposes.

Our objective is to provide state associations and state agencies with updated information about conservation district enabling legislation across the country, support NACD regional staff working to develop farm bill recommendations around soil health and payment for ecosystem services programs, and highlight relevant emerging topics.

Project Phase Schedule	
Phase 1: Project scoping & planning, Creation of methodology, Populate Airtable ¹ , Begin coding	Fall 2022
Phase 2: Continue populating database, coding; provide opportunity for input from Agencies and Associations on database and comparisons	Summer 2023
Phase 3: Use input received to review and analyze database; Draft topical memos as appropriate	Fall 2023
Phase 4: Test and make arrangements for using the live Database	Winter 2023

We are seeking input on this project to guide our work. Some guiding questions will include:

- What are the similarities and differences in District enabling legislation?
- What are existing provisions and barriers for state and District-level data ownership?
- What are examples of state/territory financial and organizational support?
- What are key opportunities for increasing equity and inclusion in CD legislation?

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¹ See Fig.1 and Fig. 2 below

Database viewable here: <https://airtable.com/appa6UCWefJpKXTMz/shrUBEBulG9s9PUHZ>

Fig. 1: A screenshot of a portion of the Airtable in its current form.

Division	Link to legislation	Short title of the law	Declaration of Poli...	Natural Resources	Definitions
1936 Model Legisla...	https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Int...		YES		YES
2 Alabama	http://alisondb.legislature.stat...	Soil and Water Conservatio...	YES	Soil Grazing Land Farmland Forest	YES
3 Alaska	https://casesext.com/statute/...	Soil and Water Conservation	YES	Farmland Forest Grazing Land	YES
4 American Samoa	https://asbar.org/section/title...		YES	Soil Water	YES
5 Arizona	https://www.azleg.gov/arsDet...	Natural Resource Conserva...	YES	Soil Water	YES
6 Arkansas	https://codes.findlaw.com/ar/...	Conservation Districts Law	YES	Farmland Grazing Land Soil Water	YES
7 California	https://leginfo.legislature.ca.g...		YES	Farmland Water Soil	YES
8 Colorado	https://law.justia.com/codes/c...	Colorado Soil Conservatio...	YES	Farmland Grazing Land Soil Water	NO
9 Connecticut	https://www.cga.ct.gov/curre...		NO		YES
10 Delaware	https://delcode.delaware.gov/...		YES	Soil Water	YES
11 District of Columbia	https://code.dccouncil.gov/us...		YES	Soil Water Forest Wildlife	YES
12 Florida	https://www.flsenate.gov/Law...		YES	Soil Water Farmland Forest Grazing Land	YES
13 Georgia	https://law.justia.com/codes/...	Soil and Water Conservatio...	YES	Soil Water Farmland Forest Grazing Land	YES
Guam	https://law.justia.com/codes/...	Soil and Water Conservatio...	YES	Soil Water	YES
15 Hawaii	https://www.capitol.hawaii.go...		NO		YES
16 Idaho	https://legislature.idaho.gov/s...	Soil Conservation District L...	YES	Soil Water	YES
	https://www.ilga.gov/legislati...	Soil and Water Conservatio...	YES	Soil Coastal Zones	YES

Fig. 2: A screenshot of the Airtable with an expanded section view.

Division	Committees Auth...	State Body Make...	District Body Makeup
1 1936 Model Legisla...			
2 Alabama	None	Section 9-8-22 State soil a...	Section 9-8-24 Supervisors. T
3 Alaska	None	Sec. 41.10.040. Natural Re...	N/A
4 American Samoa	None	24.0504 Soil and water co...	N/A
5 Arizona	None	37-1012. State natural res...	Article 4 - Administration 37...
6 Arkansas	None	14-125-108. Development...	APPOINTMENT: 14-125-206. Appointment ...
7 California	Improvement Districts in R...	Chapter 2 The Division of ...	
8 Colorado	None	35-70-103. State soil cons...	35-70-107. Board of supervis
9 Connecticut	None	Sec. 22a-314. (Formerly S...	Sec. 22a-315. (Formerly Sec.
10 Delaware	Tax Ditches	§ 3904. Advisor to Depart...	§ 3906. Boards of district sup
11 District of Columbia	None	N/A	§ 1-2804. Same - Compositio
12 Florida	Watershed Improvement...	582.06 Soil and Water Co...	582.18 Election of supervisor
13 Georgia	None	(c) The following persons ...	2-6-29. (a) The governing bou...
14 Guam	None	N/A	§63507. Composition and Res...
15 Hawaii	None	N/A	§180-12 Appointment, electio...
16 Idaho	Resource Conservation a...	22-2718. STATE SOIL CON...	22-2721. ELECTION, APPOINT...
	None	405/4. State soil and wate...	405/19. Governing body of di...

APPOINTMENT:
14-125-206. Appointment of directors - Proceedings for organization.

(a) If the commission shall determine that the operation of the proposed district within the defined boundaries is administratively practicable and feasible, it shall appoint two (2) directors to act, with the three (3) directors elected as provided hereinafter, as the governing body of the district.

(b) The district shall be a governmental subdivision of this state and a public body, corporate and politic, upon the taking of the following proceedings:

(1) The two (2) appointed directors shall present to the Secretary of State an application signed by them, which shall set forth, and the application need contain no detail other than the mere recitals:

(A)(i) That a petition for the creation of the district was filed with the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission pursuant to the provisions of this chapter and that the proceedings