



**OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE**

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Soil and Water Conservation District Program
635 Capitol St NE, Salem, OR 97301-2532
503.986.4700 | Oregon.gov/ODA

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IMPORTANT SWCD PROGRAM UPDATE

Director Eligibility Update

Managers and Administrators,

The Oregon Legislature passed SB775 which changed the eligibility for zone directors **in all** of Oregon's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD).

ORS 568.560(3)(a) states: *All zone directors must be registered voters and reside within the zones they represent in the district.*

In the past a zone director could reside anywhere within the district if they owned or managed 10-acres or more within the zone they represented. As a result of SB 775 now all zone directors must live in the zone that they represent. The change in law does effect about two dozen current directors who will no longer be eligible to hold office when the law takes effect January 1, 2024. Those zone positions will become vacant on that date. We will be contacting the affected directors and districts directly to inform them of their loss of director eligibility. Every district needs to be aware of this eligibility change when they recruit new zone directors.

The other change in law affects districts in counties with a population over 250,000 (Currently Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Lane, and Marion Counties). In these counties, zone directors no longer need to meet the 10-acre land ownership or management criteria. The zone directors in these counties only need to meet the registered voter and residence requirement as quoted above. All other districts' zone directors still must meet the 10-acre land ownership or management criteria or indicate an interest in natural resource conservation by serving at least one year as a director or associate director and having a district approved conservation plan.

The full text of SB 775 can be found here:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB775/Enrolled>

If you have any questions, please call Eric Nusbaum (503-510-8930) or Sandi Hiatt (971-301-3605).