

HS HCS HB 1433 -- WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

This bill creates the Upper White River Basin Watershed Improvement District, an area that includes Greene, Stone, Christian, Taney, Barry, Douglas, Webster, Wright, and Ozark counties. Table Rock Lake, the James River, the White River, Lake Taneycomo, and Bull Shoals Lake are located in the proposed district. Upon resolution by the governing body of any county of the third classification or by the filing of a petition signed by at least 35% of the property owners in any county of the third classification located within any other watershed in the state, a watershed improvement district may be authorized. A district is authorized to own, install, operate, and maintain decentralized or individual on-site wastewater treatment plants.

A watershed improvement district will have the power to borrow money, incur indebtedness, and submit to the qualified voters within the district a request to collect real property taxes to help fund the operation of the district.

The county commission of any county located within the Upper White River Basin Watershed Improvement District can authorize individual properties to be served by the district by adopting a resolution or upon the filing of a petition signed by at least 20% of the property owners of the proposed area.

Property that is currently served by a sewer district cannot be a part of the watershed improvement district unless the existing sewer district agrees to stop providing service to the property. The watershed improvement district will not provide service unless the property owner wants the service.

On-site wastewater treatment systems installed on property that participates in the district must meet the standards established by the district board and the appropriate state agencies.

Participating property owners must have a maintenance plan approved by the district for the on-site wastewater treatment system on their property, and they must execute a utilities easement to allow the district access to the system for maintenance and inspection.

The county, by order or ordinance or upon the filing of a petition signed by 20% of the property owners in the proposed area, may designate groundwater depletion areas and may require well volume monitoring.

After a watershed subdistrict has been organized and the organization tax has been levied, any county in the subdistrict not adopting the annual tax may detach from the subdistrict upon

approval of a majority of the qualified voters voting on the proposed detachment.

A watershed improvement district will have a board of trustees. The bill specifies the number of trustees, the length of term each trustee will serve, and the manner in which successive trustees will be chosen.

Any person or laboratory performing a wastewater analysis will be licensed by the Department of Natural Resources, and any person installing on-site sewage disposal systems will be licensed by the Department of Health and Senior Services.

The commission; a member of a watershed district's board of trustees created under Section 249.1150 or 249.1152, RSMo; or the Director of the Department of Natural Resources can request action be taken against anyone for unlawful discharge of water contaminants.