

NATURAL RESOURCES AND RECREATION

Agency 471

State Conservation Commission

Recommendation Summary

Dollars in Thousands

	Annual FTEs	General Fund State	Other Funds	Total Funds
2013-15 Expenditure Authority	17.1	13,527	3,351	16,878
Total Maintenance Level	17.1	13,462	3,301	16,763
Difference		(65)	(50)	(115)
Percent Change from Current Biennium	0.0%	(0.5)%	(1.5)%	(0.7)%
Performance Changes				
Reduce Grants and Technical Assistance		(722)		(722)
Voluntary Stewardship Program			7,600	7,600
Carlton Complex Fire Recovery Funds		3,000	4,730	7,730
Resource Specific Improvements		670		670
DES Central Services		2		2
Core Financial Systems Replacement		1		1
Fleet Program Rate Reduction		(2)		(2)
Time, Leave and Attendance System		2		2
State Public Employee Benefits Rate		21		21
Nonrepresented Job Class Specific Increases		10		10
General Wage Increase for State Employees		115		115
Subtotal		3,097	12,330	15,427
Total Proposed Budget	17.1	16,559	15,631	32,190
Difference		3,032	12,280	15,312
Percent Change from Current Biennium	0.0%	22.4%	366.5%	90.7%
Total Proposed Budget by Activity				
Technical Services and Program Delivery	6.1	9,372	14,677	24,049
Conservation District Operations and Accountability	6.0	2,600	254	2,854
State Conservation Commission Operations and Administration	5.0	4,587	700	5,287
Total Proposed Budget	17.1	16,559	15,631	32,190

PERFORMANCE LEVEL CHANGE DESCRIPTIONS

Reduce Grants and Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for administrative training is reduced to conservation districts. The agency will also reduce its pass-through funding to conservation districts for non-regulatory, incentive-based approaches such as the Trust Water Rights Program and dairy and livestock plans, resulting in fewer conservation plans and projects.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND RECREATION

Voluntary Stewardship Program

In 2011, the Legislature and Governor established the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) at the State Conservation Commission. This negotiated program resolves an ongoing dispute between the environmental community, agriculture stakeholders and counties regarding how best to protect critical areas while maintaining agricultural production. A total of 28 counties opted into this program, and funding for two counties was provided in the 2013-15 operating budget. The remaining 26 counties will be funded in the 2015-17 budget. (Public Works Assistance Account-State)

Carlton Complex Fire Recovery Funds

The Carlton Complex fire burned a state record 256,000 acres in Okanogan County, destroying over 300 homes, causing millions of dollars in damage to agricultural infrastructure, and removing critical soil stabilizing vegetation. This item funds a portion of the costs needed to recover from these losses to prevent agricultural damage from wildfire and protect water quality, including wildlife fencing, seeding, and livestock fencing. (General Fund-State, General Fund-Federal)

Resource Specific Improvements

The State Conservation Commission provides assistance to agricultural producers to meet the state's conservation goals. Nutrient management and its impact on surface and groundwater has been an increasing concern in recent years. Farmers, ranchers, dairy producers, poultry operators and small acreage land owners will receive technical services to develop and implement conservation plans where nutrient management is the overarching consideration.

DES Central Services

Agency budgets are adjusted to update each agency's allocated share of charges and to align with anticipated billing levels from the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) in the 2015-17 biennium, including changes to the enterprise systems fee, personnel services, and small agency financial services.

Core Financial Systems Replacement

Agency budgets are adjusted to align with anticipated billings from the Office of Financial Management in the 2015-17 biennium for core financial systems replacement planning through the One Washington project.

Fleet Program Rate Reduction

Agency budgets are adjusted to reflect efficiencies and reduced costs for the Department of Enterprise Services' fleet program.

Time, Leave and Attendance System

Agency budgets are adjusted to align with anticipated billings for the Time, Leave and Attendance system, including debt service and project completion costs.

State Public Employee Benefits Rate

Health insurance funding is provided for state employees who are not represented by a union or who are covered by a bargaining agreement that is not subject to financial feasibility determination. Insurance for employees covered by the health insurance coalition is included in funding for their respective collective bargaining agreements. The insurance funding rate is \$913 per employee per month for Fiscal Year 2016 and \$947 per employee per month for Fiscal Year 2017. (General Fund-State, various other accounts)

Nonrepresented Job Class Specific Increases

Funding is provided for classified state employees who are not represented by a union for pay increases in specific job classes in alignment with other employees. (General Fund-State, various other accounts)

General Wage Increase for State Employees

Funding is provided for wage increases for state employees who are not represented by a union or who are covered by a bargaining agreement that is not subject to financial feasibility determination. It is sufficient for a general wage increase of 3 percent, effective July 1, 2015; a general wage increase of 1.8 percent for employees who earn \$2,500 a month or more, effective July 1, 2016; and a general wage increase of 1 percent plus a \$20 per month increase for employees who earn less than \$2,500 per month, effective July 1, 2016. This item includes both higher education and general government workers. (General Fund-State, various other accounts)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

Technical Services and Program Delivery

The State Conservation Commission (SCC) members and staff provide the organizational framework for dispensing technical expertise and conservation program delivery to 47 conservation districts. These districts provide critical connections for conservation program delivery to local land owners. They provide technical and educational assistance and incentives to land owners that are willing to implement conservation measures to improve, enhance, and/or protect soil, water, air, plants, and animal resources. Districts identify critical natural resource issues and goals through the development of five-year plans, annual plans, and budget requests for conservation program implementation.

Conservation District Operations and Accountability

SCC staff provide guidance and oversight to the conservation districts, assuring compliance with state and federal requirements, compliance with open public meeting regulations, annual and long range planning, annual reporting of accomplishments, district operations reviews, assistance with internal audits, and oversight of elections and appointment processes. The emphasis is on quality of leadership, public service, and conservation program delivery that addresses natural resource issues across the state.

State Conservation Commission Operations and Administration

SCC members oversee state funding for the conservation districts and provide guidance and policy direction to the Executive Director for Commission staff to implement. Members examine issues pertaining to the rights and needs of the conservation district community and make recommendations to the Governor, Legislature, and state agencies for changes in programs and laws. This activity supports agency functions by providing leadership, cross-program support, and staff presence throughout the state. Operations and Administration manages the agency's long-term financial health and provides the information to support sound decision-making and resource management. It also provides human resource services, facility and vehicle management, maintains the agency's centralized records and library resources, responds to public records requests, and certifies conservation district elections and appointment processes.