

**United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service**



# State Technical Committee **2008 Farm Bill Overview**

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State Technical Committees serve in an advisory capacity to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the implementation of natural resource conservation activities and programs.

- State Technical Committees were established by the 1985 Food Security Act.
- Subsequent Farm Bills changed the membership, responsibilities, and required public notice of the meetings.

**The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) made the following changes to State Technical Committees:**

- Membership now specifically includes owners of nonindustrial private forest land.
- Agricultural producers are no longer required to have conservation expertise as a condition of membership

**The 2008 Farm Bill made the following changes to State Technical Committees:  
(Membership Cont'd):**

- Agricultural producer members are to represent a variety of crops and livestock raised within the State
- Non-profit organizations must now have experience working with agricultural producers

## **The 2008 Farm Bill made the following changes to State Technical Committees (Cont'd):**

- Exempted Local Working Groups from the Federal Advisory Committee Act.
- Added review of whether Local Working Groups are addressing State (National) priorities.

## **The 2008 Farm Bill made the following changes to State Technical Committees (Cont'd):**

- Supported standardization of Committee operations through the development and publication of standard operating procedures (SOP).
- Reaffirmed the role of the State Technical Committees as advisory in nature.

- An interim final rule was published in the Federal Register on November 25, 2008. It included a request for comments. Sixteen (16) comments were received.
- An updated State Technical Committee policy, including a SOP, is being published in the Federal Register.

## Comments were received from:

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
California Department of Pest Regulation  
Carlsbad New Mexico SWCD  
Dept of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Indian Nations Conservation Alliance  
Indiana Wildlife Federation  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
Monongahela Conservation District  
National Sustainable Agricultural Coalition  
South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Utah Association of Conservation Districts  
Virginia Department of Forestry  
Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts  
Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District

## To Summarize:

- The State Conservationist in each State is to ensure representation of all interests to the extent practicable.
- State Technical Committees are composed of representatives from Federal and State natural resource agencies, American Indian Tribes, agricultural and environmental organizations, a diverse group of agricultural producers, and non-industrial private forest landowners.

- Committees are to meet regularly to provide information, analysis, and recommendations to appropriate USDA officials, who strongly consider their advice.
- Individuals or groups wanting to participate as members of the State Technical Committee may submit requests to the State Conservationist explaining their interest and relevant credentials.

## **Local Working Groups:**

- Normally chaired by Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- Provide recommendations to the District Conservationists and/or the State Technical Committee on local natural resource priorities and criteria for conservation activities and programs.



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