

2-1588

Fund; allocation; report; projects; costs.

(1) Any money in the Nebraska Resources Development Fund may be allocated by the commission in accordance with sections 2-1586 to 2-1595 for utilization by the department, by any state office, agency, board, or commission, or by any political subdivision of the state which has the authority to develop the state's water and related land resources. Such money may be allocated in the form of grants or loans or for acquiring state interests in water and related land resources programs and projects undertaken within the state. The allocation of funds to a program or project in one form shall not of itself preclude additional allocations in the same or any other form to the same program or project. Funds may also be allocated to assist natural resources districts in the preparation of management plans as provided in section 46-709. Funds so allocated shall not be subject to sections 2-1589 to 2-1595.

(2) No project, including all related phases, segments, parts, or divisions, shall receive more than ten million dollars from the fund. On July 1, 1994, and each year thereafter, the director shall adjust the project cost and payment limitation of this subsection by an amount equal to the average percentage change in the ~~federal Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Composite Construction Cost Index~~ a readily available construction cost index for the prior three years.

(3) Prior to September 1 of each even-numbered year, a biennial report shall be made to the Governor and the Clerk of the Legislature describing the work accomplished by the use of such development fund during the immediately preceding two-year period. The report shall include a complete financial statement. Each member of the Legislature shall receive a copy of such report upon making a request to the director.

2-3240

Districts; certain activities; laws, rules, and regulations applicable.

In matters pertaining to applications for appropriation and use of surface water, construction of dams, drainage and channel rectification projects, and installation of ground water wells, districts shall comply with Chapter 46, articles 2, ~~and 6, and 7,~~ and the applicable rules and regulations of the

department.

46-229.02

Appropriations; preliminary determination of nonuse; notice; order of cancellation; procedure.

(1) If, based upon the results of a field investigation or upon information, however obtained, the department makes preliminary determinations (a) that an appropriation has not been used, in whole or in part, for a beneficial or useful purpose or having been so used at one time has ceased to be used, in whole or in part, for such purpose for more than five consecutive years and (b) that the department knows of no reason that constitutes sufficient cause, as provided in section 46-229.04, for such nonuse or that such nonuse has continued beyond the additional time permitted because of the existence of any applicable sufficient cause, the department shall serve notice of such preliminary determinations upon the owner or owners of such appropriation and upon any other person who is an owner of the land under such appropriation. Such notice shall contain the information required by section 46-229.03, shall be provided in the manner required by such section, and shall be posted on the department's web site. Each owner of the appropriation and any owner of the land under such appropriation shall have thirty days after the mailing or last publication, as applicable, of such notice to notify the department, on a form provided by the department, that he or she contests the department's preliminary determination of nonuse or the department's preliminary determination of the absence of sufficient cause for such nonuse. Such notification shall indicate the reason or reasons the owner is contesting the department's preliminary determination and include any information the owner believes is relevant to the issues of nonuse or sufficient cause for such nonuse.

(2) If no owner of the appropriation or of the land under the appropriation provides notification to the department in accordance with subsection (1) of this section, the director may issue an order canceling the appropriation in whole or in part. The extent of such cancellation shall not exceed the extent described in the department's notice to the owner or owners in accordance with subsection (1) of this section. A copy of the order canceling the appropriation, or part thereof, shall

be posted on the department's web site and shall be provided to the owner or owners of the appropriation and to any other owner of the land under the appropriation in the same manner that notices are to be given in accordance with subsection (2), (3), or (4) of section 46-229.03, as applicable. No cancellation under this subsection shall prohibit an irrigation district, reclamation district, public power and irrigation district, or mutual irrigation company or canal company, from asserting the rights provided for in 46-229.04 subsections (5) and (6).

(3) If an owner of the appropriation provides notification to the department in accordance with subsection (1) of this section, the department shall review the owner's stated reasons for contesting the department's preliminary determination and any other information provided with the owner's notice. If the department determines that the owner has provided sufficient information for the department to conclude that the appropriation should not be canceled, in whole or in part, it shall inform the owners of the appropriation, and any other owners of the land under the appropriation, of such determination.

(4) If the department determines that an owner has provided sufficient information to support the conclusion that the appropriation should be canceled only in part and if (a) the owner or owners filing the notice of contest agree in writing to such cancellation in part and (b) such owner or owners are the only known owners of the appropriation and of the land under the appropriation, the director may issue an order canceling the appropriation to the extent agreed to by the owner or owners and shall provide a copy of such order to such owner or owners.

(5) If the department determines that subsections (2), (3), and (4) of this section do not apply, it shall schedule and conduct a hearing on the cancellation of the appropriation in whole or in part. Notice of the hearing shall be provided to the owner or owners who filed notices with the department pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, to any other owner of the appropriation known to the department, and to any other owner of the land under the appropriation. The notice shall be posted on the department's web site and shall be served or published, as applicable, in the manner provided in subsection (2), (3), or (4) of section 46-229.03, as applicable.

(6) Following a hearing conducted in accordance with subsection (5) of this section and subsection (1) of section 46-229.04, the director shall render a decision by order. A copy of the order shall be provided to the owner or owners of the appropriation and to any other person who is an owner of the land under the appropriation. The copy of the order shall be posted on the department's web site and shall be served or published, as applicable, in the same manner that notices are to be given in

accordance with subsection (2), (3), or (4) of section 46-229.03, as applicable, except that if publication is required, it shall be sufficient for the department to publish notice that an order has been issued. Any such published notice shall identify the land or lands involved and shall provide the address and telephone number that may be used to obtain a copy of the order.

(7) A water appropriation that has not been perfected pursuant to the terms of the permit may be canceled by the Department without complying with sections 46-229.01 to 46-229.04 if the owner of such appropriation fails to comply with any of the conditions of approval in the permit.

46-229.03

Appropriations; preliminary determination of nonuse; notice; contents; service.

(1) The notice provided by the department in accordance with subsection (1) or (5) of section 46-229.02 shall contain: (a) A description of the appropriation; (b) the number assigned to the appropriation by the department; (c) the date of priority; (d) the point of diversion; (e) if the notice is published, the section or sections of land which contain the lands located under such appropriation; (f) if the notice is served by personal service or by registered or certified mail, a description of the lands which are located under such appropriation, a description of the information used by the department to reach the preliminary determinations of nonuse, and a copy of section 46-229.04; (g) a description of the owner's options in response to the notice; (h) a department telephone number which any person may call during normal business hours for more information regarding the owner's rights and options, including what constitutes sufficient cause for nonuse; (i) ~~if the notice is provided in accordance with subsection (1) of section 46-229.02 and is mailed, a copy of the form that such owner may file to request a departmental hearing contest such determination, if the notice is provided in accordance with subsection (1) of section 46-229.02 and is mailed;~~ (j) ~~if the notice is provided in accordance with subsection (1) of section 46-229.02 and is published, the location where the owner may obtain a form to file to request a departmental hearing contest such determination, if the notice is provided in accordance with subsection (1) of section 46-229.02 and is published;~~ and (k) if the notice is provided in accordance with subsection (5) of section 46-229.02, the date, time, and location of the hearing.

(2) For any owner whose name and address are known to

the department or can be reasonably obtained by the department, the notice shall be served by personal service or by registered mail or certified mail. Any landowner's name or address shall be considered reasonably obtainable if that person is listed as an owner of the land involved, on the records of the county clerk or register of deeds for the county in which the land is located.

(3) For any owner whose name and address are not known to the department and cannot reasonably be obtained by the department, such notice shall be served by publication in a legal newspaper published or of general circulation in any county in which the place of diversion is located and in a legal newspaper published or of general circulation in each county containing land for which the right to use water under the appropriation is subject to cancellation. Each such publication shall be once each week for three consecutive weeks.

(4) Landowners whose property under such appropriation is located within the corporate limits of a city or village shall be served by the publication of such notice in a legal newspaper published or of general circulation in the county in which the city or village is located. The notice shall be published once each week for three consecutive weeks.

46-229.04

Appropriations; hearing; decision; nonuse; considerations; consolidation of proceedings; when.

(1) At such hearing the verified field investigation report of an employee of the department, or such other report or information that is relied upon by the Department may rely upon to reach the preliminary determination of nonuse, shall be prima facie evidence for the forfeiture and annulment of such water appropriation. If no person appears at the hearing, such water appropriation or unused part thereof shall be declared forfeited and annulled. If an interested person appears and contests the same, the department shall hear evidence, and if it appears that such water has not been put to a beneficial use or has ceased to be used for such purpose for more than five consecutive years, the same shall be declared canceled and annulled unless the department finds that (a) there has been sufficient cause for such nonuse as provided for in subsection (2), (3), or (4) of this section or (b) subsection (5) or (6) of this section applies.

(2) Sufficient cause for nonuse shall be deemed to

exist for up to thirty consecutive years if such nonuse was caused by the unavailability of water for that use. For a river basin, subbasin, or reach that has been designated as overappropriated pursuant to section 46-713 or determined by the department to be fully appropriated pursuant to section 46-714, the period of time within which sufficient cause for nonuse because of the unavailability of water may be deemed to exist may be extended beyond thirty years by the department upon petition therefor by the owner of the appropriation if the department determines that an integrated management plan being implemented in the river basin, subbasin, or reach involved is likely to result in restoration of a usable water supply for the appropriation.

(3) Sufficient cause for nonuse shall be deemed to exist indefinitely if such nonuse was the result of one or more of the following:

(a) For any tract of land under separate ownership, the available supply was used but on only part of the land under the appropriation because of an inadequate water supply;

(b) The appropriation is a storage appropriation and there was an inadequate water supply to provide the water for the storage appropriation or less than the full amount of the storage appropriation was needed to keep the reservoir full; or

(c) The appropriation is a storage-use appropriation and there was an inadequate water supply to provide the water for the appropriation or use of the storage water was unnecessary because of climatic conditions.

(4) Sufficient cause for nonuse shall be deemed to exist for up to fifteen consecutive years if such nonuse was a result of one or more of the following:

(a) Federal, state, or local laws, rules, or regulations temporarily prevented or restricted such use;

(b) Use of the water was unnecessary because of climatic conditions;

(c) Circumstances were such that a prudent person, following the principles of good husbandry, would not have been expected to use the water;

(d) The works, diversions, or other facilities essential to use the water were destroyed by a cause not within the control of the owner of the appropriation and good faith efforts to repair or replace the works, diversions, or facilities have been and are being made;

(e) The owner of the appropriation was in active involuntary service in the armed forces of the United States or was in active voluntary service during a time of crisis;

(f) Legal proceedings prevented or restricted use of

the water; or

(g) The land subject to the appropriation is under an acreage reserve program or production quota or is otherwise withdrawn from use as required for participation in any federal or state program or such land previously was under such a program but currently is not under such a program and there have been not more than five consecutive years of nonuse on that land since that land was last under that program.

The department may specify by rule and regulation other circumstances that shall be deemed to constitute sufficient cause for nonuse for up to fifteen years.

(5) When an appropriation is held in the name of an irrigation district, reclamation district, public power and irrigation district, or mutual irrigation company or canal company and the director determines that water under that appropriation has not been used on a specific parcel of land for more than five years and that no sufficient cause for such nonuse exists, the right to use water under that appropriation on that parcel shall be terminated and notice of the termination shall be posted on the department's web site and shall be given in the manner provided in subsection (2), (3), or (4) of section 46-229.03. The district or company holding such right shall have five years after the determination, or five years after an order of cancellation issued by the department following the filing of a voluntary relinquishment of the water appropriation that has been signed by the landowner and the appropriator of record, to assign the right to use that portion of the appropriation to other land within and served by the district or company or to file an application for a transfer in accordance with section 46-290. The department shall be notified of any such assignment within thirty days thereafter. If the district or company does not assign the right to use that portion of the appropriation to other land, does not file an application for a transfer within the five-year period, or does not notify the department within thirty days after any such assignment, that portion of the appropriation shall be canceled without further proceedings by the department and the district or company involved shall be so notified by the department. During the time within which assignment of a portion of an appropriation is pending, the allowable diversion rate for the appropriation involved shall be reduced, as necessary, to avoid inconsistency with the rate allowed by section 46-231 or with any greater rate previously approved for such appropriation by the director in accordance with section 46-229.06.

(6) When it is determined by the director that an appropriation, for which the location of use has been temporarily transferred in accordance with sections 46-290 to 46-294, has not

been used at the new location for more than five years and that no sufficient cause for such nonuse exists, the right to use that appropriation at the temporary location of use shall be terminated. Notice of that termination shall be posted on the department's web site and shall be given in the manner provided in subsection (2), (3), or (4) of section 46-229.03. The right to reinitiate use of that appropriation at the location of use prior to the temporary transfer shall continue to exist for five years after the director's determination, but if such use is not reinitiated at that location within such five-year period, the appropriation shall be subject to cancellation in accordance with sections 46-229 to 46-229.04.

(7) If at the time of a hearing conducted in accordance with subsection (1) of this section there is an application for incidental or intentional underground water storage pending before the department and filed by the owner of the appropriation, the proceedings shall be consolidated.

#### 46-290 TO BE REVISITED

Appropriation; application to transfer or change; contents; approval.

(1)(a) Except as provided in this section and sections 46-2,120 to 46-2,130, any person having a permit to appropriate water for beneficial purposes issued pursuant to sections 46-233 to 46-235, 46-240.01, 46-241, ~~or 46-242~~ or 46-637 and who desires (i) to transfer the use of such appropriation to a location other than the location specified in the permit, (ii) to change that appropriation to a different type of appropriation as provided in subsection (3) of this section, or (iii) to change the purpose for which the water is to be used under a natural-flow, storage, or storage-use appropriation to a purpose not at that time permitted under the appropriation shall apply for approval of such transfer or change to the Department of Natural Resources.

(b) The application for such approval shall contain (i) the number assigned to such appropriation by the department, (ii) the name and address of the present holder of the appropriation, (iii) if applicable, the name and address of the person or entity to whom the appropriation would be transferred or who will be the user of record after a change in the location of use, type of appropriation, or purpose of use under the appropriation, (iv) the legal description of the land to which the appropriation is now appurtenant, (v) the name and address of each holder of a mortgage or deed of trust for the land to which the appropriation



is now appurtenant, (vi) if applicable, the legal description of the land to which the appropriation is proposed to be transferred, (vii) if a transfer is proposed, whether other sources of water are available at the original location of use and whether any provisions have been made to prevent either use of a new source of water at the original location or increased use of water from any existing source at that location, (viii) if applicable, the legal descriptions of the beginning and end of the stream reach to which the appropriation is proposed to be transferred for the purpose of augmenting the flows in that stream reach, (ix) if a proposed transfer is for the purpose of increasing the quantity of water available for use pursuant to another appropriation, the number assigned to such other appropriation by the department, (x) the purpose of the current use, (xi) if a change in purpose of use is proposed, the proposed purpose of use, (xii) if a change in the type of appropriation is proposed, the type of appropriation to which a change is desired, (xiii) if a proposed transfer or change is to be temporary in nature, the duration of the proposed transfer or change, and (xiv) such other information as the department by rule and regulation requires.

(2) If a proposed transfer or change is to be temporary in nature, a copy of the proposed agreement between the current appropriator and the person who is to be responsible for use of water under the appropriation while the transfer or change is in effect shall be submitted at the same time as the application.

(3) Regardless of whether a transfer or a change in the purpose of use is involved, the following changes in type of appropriation, if found by the Director of Natural Resources to be consistent with section 46-294, may be approved subject to the following:

(a) A natural-flow appropriation for direct out-of-stream use may be changed to a natural-flow appropriation for aboveground reservoir storage or for intentional underground water storage;

(b) A natural-flow appropriation for intentional underground water storage may be changed to a natural-flow appropriation for direct out-of-stream use or for aboveground reservoir storage;

(c) A natural-flow appropriation for direct out-of-stream use, for aboveground reservoir storage, or for intentional underground water storage may be changed to an instream appropriation subject to sections 46-2,107 to 46-2,119 if the director determines that the resulting instream appropriation would be consistent with subdivisions (2), (3), and (4) of section 46-2,115;

(d) A natural-flow appropriation for direct out-of-stream use, for aboveground reservoir storage, or for intentional underground water storage may be changed to an appropriation for induced ground water recharge if the director determines that the resulting appropriation for induced ground water recharge would be consistent with subdivisions (2)(a)(i) and (ii) of section 46-235; and

(e) The incidental underground water storage portion, whether or not previously quantified, of a natural-flow or storage-use appropriation may be separated from the direct-use portion of the appropriation and may be changed to a natural-flow or storage-use appropriation for intentional underground water storage at the same location if the historic consumptive use of the direct-use portion of the appropriation is transferred to another location or is terminated, but such a separation and change may be approved only if, after the separation and change, (i) the total permissible diversion under the appropriation will not increase, (ii) the projected consequences of the separation and change are consistent with the provisions of any integrated management plan adopted in accordance with section 46-718 or 46-719 for the geographic area involved, and (iii) if the location of the proposed intentional underground water storage is in a river basin, subbasin, or reach designated as overappropriated in accordance with section 46-713, the integrated management plan for that river basin, subbasin, or reach has gone into effect, and that plan requires that the amount of the intentionally stored water that is consumed after the change will be no greater than the amount of the incidentally stored water that was consumed prior to the change. Approval of a separation and change pursuant to this subdivision (e) shall not exempt any consumptive use associated with the incidental recharge right from any reduction in water use required by an integrated management plan for a river basin, subbasin, or reach designated as overappropriated in accordance with section 46-713.

Whenever any change in type of appropriation is approved pursuant to this subsection and as long as that change remains in effect, the appropriation shall be subject to the statutes, rules, and regulations that apply to the type of appropriation to which the change has been made.

(4) The Legislature finds that induced ground water recharge appropriations issued pursuant to sections 46-233 and 46-235 and instream appropriations issued pursuant to section 46-2,115 are specific to the location identified in the appropriation. Neither type of appropriation shall be transferred to a different location, changed to a different type of appropriation, or changed to permit a different purpose of

use.

(5) In addition to any other purposes for which transfers and changes may be approved, such transfers and changes may be approved if the purpose is (a) to augment the flow in a specific stream reach for any instream use that the department has determined, through rules and regulations, to be a beneficial use or (b) to increase the frequency that a diversion rate or rate of flow specified in another valid appropriation is achieved.

For any transfer or change approved pursuant to subdivision (a) of this subsection, the department shall be provided with a report at least every five years while such transfer or change is in effect. The purpose of such report shall be to indicate whether the beneficial instream use for which the flow is augmented continues to exist. If the report indicates that it does not or if no report is filed within sixty days after the department's notice to the appropriator that the deadline for filing the report has passed, the department may cancel its approval of the transfer or change and such appropriation shall revert to the same location of use, type of appropriation, and purpose of use as prior to such approval.

(6) A quantified or unquantified appropriation for incidental underground water storage may be transferred to a new location along with the direct-use appropriation with which it is recognized if the director finds such transfer to be consistent with section 46-294 and determines that the geologic and other relevant conditions at the new location are such that incidental underground water storage will occur at the new location. The director may request such information from the applicant as is needed to make such determination and may modify any such quantified appropriation for incidental underground water storage, if necessary, to reflect the geologic and other conditions at the new location.

(7) Unless an incidental underground water storage appropriation is changed as authorized by subdivision (3)(e) of this section or is transferred as authorized by subsection (6) of this section or subsection (1) of section 46-291, such appropriation shall be canceled or modified, as appropriate, by the director to reflect any reduction in water that will be stored underground as the result of a transfer or change of the direct-use appropriation with which the incidental underground water storage was recognized prior to the transfer or change.

46-291

~~46-291~~ Application; review; notice; contents; comments. (1) Upon receipt of an application filed under section 46-290 for a transfer in the location of use of an

appropriation, the Department of Natural Resources shall review it for compliance with this subsection. The Director of Natural Resources may approve the application without notice or hearing if he or she determines that:

(a) The appropriation is used and will continue to be used exclusively for irrigation purposes; (b) the only lands involved in the proposed transfer are (i) lands within the quarter section of land to which the appropriation is appurtenant, (ii) lands within such quarter section of land and one or more quarter sections of land each of which is contiguous to the quarter section of land to which the appropriation is appurtenant, or (iii) lands within the boundaries or service area of and capable of service by the same irrigation district, reclamation district, public power and irrigation district, or mutual irrigation or canal company;; (c) after the transfer, the total number of acres irrigated under the appropriation will be no greater than the number of acres that could legally be irrigated under the appropriation prior to the transfer; (d) all the land involved in the transfer is under the same ownership or is within the same irrigation district, reclamation district, public power and irrigation district, or mutual irrigation or canal company; (e) the transfer will not result in a change in the point of diversion; and (f) the transfer will not diminish the water supply available for or otherwise adversely affect any other water appropriator. If transfer of an appropriation with associated incidental underground water storage is approved in accordance with this subsection, the associated incidental underground water storage also may be transferred pursuant to this subsection as long as such transfer would continue to be consistent with the requirements of this subsection. If necessary, the boundaries of the incidental underground water storage area may be modified to reflect any change in the location of that storage consistent with such a transfer. Transfers shall not be approved pursuant to this subsection until the department has adopted and promulgated rules and regulations establishing the criteria it will use to determine whether proposed transfers are consistent with subdivision (1)(f) of this section.

(2) If after reviewing an application filed under section 46-290 the director determines that it cannot be approved pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, he or she shall cause a notice of such application to be posted on the department's web site, to be sent by certified mail to each holder of a mortgage or deed of trust that is identified by the applicant pursuant to subdivision (1)(b)(v) of section 46-290 and to any entity owning facilities currently used or proposed to be used for purpose of diversion or delivery of water under the appropriation, and to be published at the applicant's expense at least once each week for three consecutive weeks in at least one newspaper of general circulation in each county containing lands to which the appropriation is appurtenant and, if applicable, in at least one newspaper of general circulation in each county containing lands to which the appropriation is proposed to be transferred.

(3) The notice shall contain: (a) A description of the appropriation; (b) the number assigned to such appropriation in the records of the department; (c) the date of priority; (d) if applicable, a description of the land or stream reach to

which such water appropriation is proposed to be transferred; (e) if applicable, the type of appropriation to which the appropriation is proposed to be changed; (f) if applicable, the proposed change in the purpose of use; (g) whether the proposed transfer or change is to be permanent or temporary and, if temporary, the duration of the proposed transfer or change; and (h) any other information the director deems relevant and essential to provide the interested public with adequate notice of the proposed transfer or change.

(4) The notice shall state (a) that any interested person may object to and request a hearing on the application by filing such objections in writing specifically stating the grounds for each objection and (b) that any such objection and request shall be filed in the office of the department within two weeks after the date of final publication of the notice.

(5) Within the time period allowed by this section for the filing of objections and requests for hearings, the county board of any county containing land to which the appropriation is appurtenant and, if applicable, the county board of any county containing land to which the appropriation is proposed to be transferred may provide the department with comments about the potential economic impacts of the proposed transfer or change in such county. The filing of any such comments by a county board shall not make the county a party in the application process, but such comments shall be considered by the director in determining pursuant to section 46-294 whether the proposed transfer or change is in the public interest.

46-294

Applications; approval; requirements; conditions; burden of proof.

(1) Except for applications approved in accordance with subsection (1) of section 46-291, the Director of Natural Resources shall approve an application filed pursuant to section 46-290 only if the application and the proposed transfer or change meet the following requirements:

(a) The application is complete and all other information requested pursuant to section 46-293 has been provided;

(b) The proposed use of water after the transfer or change will be a beneficial use of water;

(c)(i) Any requested transfer in the location of use is within the same river basin as defined in section 46-288 or (ii) the river basin from which the appropriation is to be transferred is tributary to the river basin to which the appropriation is to

be transferred;

(d) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (4) of this section, the proposed transfer or change, alone or when combined with any new or increased use of any other source of water at the original location or within the same irrigation district, reclamation district, public power and irrigation district, or mutual irrigation or canal company for the original or other purposes, will not diminish the supply of water available for or otherwise adversely affect any other water appropriator and will not significantly adversely affect any riparian water user who files an objection in writing pursuant to section 46-291;

(e) The quantity of water that is transferred for diversion or other use at the new location will not exceed the historic consumptive use under the appropriation or portion thereof being transferred, except that this subdivision does not apply to a transfer in the location of use if both the current use and the proposed use are for irrigation, the number of acres to be irrigated will not increase after the transfer, and the location of the diversion from the stream will not change;

(f) The appropriation, prior to the transfer or change, is not subject to termination or cancellation pursuant to sections 46-229 to 46-229.04;

(g) If a proposed transfer or change is of an appropriation that has been used for irrigation and is in the name of an irrigation district, reclamation district, public power and irrigation district, or mutual irrigation or canal company or is dependent upon any such district's or company's facilities for water delivery, such district or company has approved the transfer or change;

(h) If the proposed transfer or change is of a storage-use appropriation and if the owner of that appropriation is different from the owner of the associated storage appropriation, the owner of the storage appropriation has approved the transfer or change;

(i) If the proposed transfer or change is to be permanent, either (i) the purpose for which the water is to be used before the transfer or change is in the same preference category established by section 46-204 as the purpose for which the water is to be used after the transfer or change or (ii) the purpose for which the water is to be used before the transfer or change and the purpose for which the water is to be used after the transfer or change are both purposes for which no preferences are established by section 46-204;

(j) If the proposed transfer or change is to be temporary, it will be for a duration of no less than one year

and, except as provided in section 46-294.02, no more than thirty years;

(k) The transfer or change will not be inconsistent with any applicable state or federal law and will not jeopardize the state's compliance with any applicable interstate water compact or decree or cause difficulty in fulfilling the provisions of any other formal state contract or agreement; and

(l) The proposed transfer or change is in the public interest. The director's considerations relative to the public interest shall include, but not be limited to, (i) the economic, social, and environmental impacts of the proposed transfer or change and (ii) whether and under what conditions other sources of water are available for the uses to be made of the appropriation after the proposed transfer or change. The Department of Natural Resources shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to govern the director's determination of whether a proposed transfer or change is in the public interest.

(2) The applicant has the burden of proving that the proposed transfer or change will comply with subdivisions (1)(a) through (1) of this section, except that (a) the burden is on a riparian user to demonstrate his or her riparian status and to demonstrate a significant adverse effect on his or her use in order to prevent approval of an application and (b) if both the current use and the proposed use after a transfer are for irrigation, the number of acres to be irrigated will not increase after the transfer, and the location of the diversion from the stream will not change, there is a rebuttable presumption that the transfer will be consistent with subdivision (1)(d) of this section.

(3) In approving an application, the director may impose any reasonable conditions deemed necessary to protect the public interest, to ensure consistency with any of the other criteria in subsection (1) of this section, or to provide the department with information needed to properly and efficiently administer the appropriation while the transfer or change remains in effect. If necessary to prevent diminution of supply for any other appropriator, the conditions imposed by the director shall require that historic return flows be maintained or replaced in quantity, timing, and location. After approval of any such transfer or change, the appropriation shall be subject to all water use restrictions and requirements in effect at any new location of use and, if applicable, at any new diversion location. An appropriation for which a transfer or change has been approved shall retain the same priority date as that of the original appropriation. If an approved transfer or change is temporary, the location of use, purpose of use, or type of

appropriation shall revert to the location of use, purpose of use, or type of appropriation prior to the transfer or change.

(4) In approving an application for a transfer, the director may also authorize the overlying of water appropriations on the same lands, except that if any such overlying of appropriations would result in either the authorized diversion rate or the authorized aggregate annual quantity that could be diverted to be greater than is otherwise permitted by section 46-231, the director shall limit the total diversion rate or aggregate annual quantity for the appropriations overlain to the rate or quantity that he or she determines is necessary, in the exercise of good husbandry, for the production of crops on the land involved. The director may also authorize a greater number of acres to be irrigated if the amount and rate of water approved under the original appropriation is not increased by the change of location. An increase in the number of acres to be irrigated shall be approved only if (a) such an increase will not diminish the supply of water available to or otherwise adversely affect another water appropriator or (b) the transfer would not adversely affect the water supply for any river basin, subbasin, or reach that has been designated as overappropriated pursuant to section 46-713 or determined to be fully appropriated pursuant to section 46-714 and (i) the number of acres authorized under the appropriation when originally approved has not been increased previously, (ii) the increase in the number of acres irrigated will not exceed five percent of the number of acres being irrigated under the permit before the proposed transfer or a total of ten acres, whichever acreage is less, and (iii) all the use will be either on the quarter section to which the appropriation was appurtenant before the transfer or on an adjacent quarter section.

46-294.01

Appropriation; temporary transfer; filings required.

Whenever a temporary transfer is approved in accordance with sections 46-290 to 46-294, the ~~Department of Natural Resources~~ applicant shall, within sixty days of the Department's order of approval, cause copies of the following to be filed with the county clerk or register of deeds of the county in which the land subject to the appropriation prior to the transfer is located: (1) The permit by which the appropriation was established; (2) the agreement by which the temporary transfer is to be effected; and (3) the order of the Director of Natural



Resources approving the temporary transfer. Whenever renewal of a temporary transfer is approved pursuant to section 46-294.02, the department applicant shall, within sixty days of such approval, cause a copy of the order of the director approving such renewal to be filed with the county clerk or register of deeds of such county. Such documents shall be indexed to the land subject to the appropriation prior to the transfer. ~~The costs of the filing and indexing shall be charged to the applicant for the transfer or renewal.~~ The applicant shall file with the Department, within ninety days of the Department's order of approval, proof of filing with the county clerk or register of deeds. ~~and Failure to pay such costs file proof of filing within the time specified shall be grounds for the director to negate any prior approval of the transfer or renewal.~~

46-2,112

Permit to appropriate water for instream flows; hearing; when; notice; director; powers.

A permit to appropriate water for instream flows shall be subject to review every fifteen years after it is granted. Notice of a pending review shall be published in a newspaper published or of general circulation in the area involved at least once each week for three consecutive weeks, the last publication to be not later than fourteen years and ten months after the permit was granted or after the date of the director's action following the last such review, whichever is later, and such notice shall be mailed to the appropriator of record and be posted on the Department of Natural Resources' web site. The notice shall state that any interested person may file comments relating to the review of the instream appropriation or may request a hearing to present evidence relevant to such review. Any such comments or request for hearing shall be filed in the headquarters office of the department within six weeks after the date of final publication of the notice. The appropriator of record shall, within the six week period, file written documentation of the continued use of the appropriation. If no requests for hearing are received, and if the Director is satisfied with the information provided by the appropriator of record that the appropriation continues to be beneficially used and in the public interest, the Director shall issue an order stating such findings. If requested by any interested person, or on his or her own motion based on the comments and information filed, the director shall schedule a hearing. The if a hearing is held, the purpose of the hearing shall be to receive evidence regarding whether the water

appropriated under the permit still provides the beneficial uses for which the permit was granted and whether the permit is still in the public interest. The hearing shall proceed under the rebuttable presumption that the appropriation continues to provide the beneficial uses for which the permit was granted and that the appropriation is in the public interest. After the hearing, the director may by order modify or cancel, in whole or in part, the instream appropriation.

46-602

Registration of water wells; forms; replacement; change in ownership; illegal water well; decommissioning required; abandonment.

(1) Each water well completed in this state on or after July 1, 2001, excluding test holes and dewatering wells to be used for less than ninety days, shall be registered with the Department of Natural Resources as provided in this section within sixty days after completion of construction of the water well. The water well contractor as defined in section 46-1213 constructing the water well, or the owner of the water well if the owner constructed the water well, shall file the registration on a form made available by the department and shall also file with the department the information from the well log required pursuant to section 46-1241. The department shall, by January 1, 2002, provide water well contractors with the option of filing such registration forms electronically. No signature shall be required on forms filed electronically. The fee required by subsection (3) of section 46-1224 shall be the source of funds for any required fee to a contractor which provides the on-line services for such registration. Any discount in the amount paid the state by a credit card, charge card, or debit card company or a third-party merchant bank for such registration fees shall be deducted from the portion of the registration fee collected pursuant to section 46-1224.

(2)(a) If the newly constructed water well is a replacement water well, the registration number of the water well it replaces, if applicable, and the date the original water well was or will be decommissioned shall be included on the registration form. For purposes of this section, replacement water well means a water well which (i) replaces an abandoned water well within three years after the last operation of the abandoned water well or replaces a water well that will not be used after construction of the new water well and the original

water well will be abandoned within one year after such construction and (ii) is constructed to provide water to the same tract of land served by the water well being replaced.

(b) No water well shall be registered as a replacement water well until the Department of Natural Resources has received a properly completed notice of abandonment for the water well being replaced. Such notice shall be completed by (i) the water well contractor as defined in section 46-1213 who decommissions the water well, (ii) the pump installation contractor as defined in section 46-1209 who decommissions the water well, or (iii) the owner if the owner decommissions a driven sandpoint well which is on land owned by him or her for farming, ranching, or agricultural purposes or as his or her place of abode. The Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure shall, by rule and regulation, determine which contractor or owner shall be responsible for such notice in situations in which more than one contractor or owner may be required to provide notice under this subsection.

(3) For a series of two or more water wells completed and pumped into a common carrier as part of a single site plan for irrigation purposes, a registration form and a detailed site plan shall be filed for each water well. The registration form shall include the registration numbers of other water wells included in the series if such water wells are already registered.

(4) A series of water wells completed for purposes of installation of a ground heat exchanger for a structure for utilizing the geothermal properties of the ground shall be considered as one water well. One registration form and a detailed site plan shall be filed for each such series.

(5) One registration form shall be required along with a detailed site plan which shows the location of each such water well in the site and a log from each such water well for water wells constructed as part of a single site plan for (a) monitoring ground water, obtaining hydrogeologic information, or extracting contaminants from the ground, (b) water wells constructed as part of remedial action approved by the Department of Environmental Quality pursuant to section 66-1525, 66-1529.02, or 81-15,124, and (c) water well owners who have a permit issued pursuant to the Industrial Ground Water Regulatory Act and also have an underground injection control permit issued by the Department of Environmental Quality.

(6) The department shall be notified by the owner of any change in the ownership of a water well required to be registered under this section. Notification shall be in such form and include such evidence of ownership as the Director of

Natural Resources by rule and regulation directs. The department shall use such notice to update the registration on file. The department shall not collect a fee for the filing of the notice.

(7) The water well contractor or pump installation contractor responsible therefor shall notify the department, within sixty days, on a form provided by the department of any pump installation or any modifications to the construction of the water well or pump, after the initial registration of the well. A water well owner shall notify the department, within sixty days, on a form provided by the department of any other changes or any inaccuracies in recorded water well information, including, but not limited to, changes in use. The department shall not collect a fee for the filing of the notice.

(8) Whenever a water well becomes an illegal water well as defined in section 46-706, the owner of the water well shall either correct the deficiency that causes the well to be an illegal water well or shall cause the proper decommissioning of the water well in accordance with rules and regulations adopted pursuant to the Water Well Standards and Contractors' Licensing Act. The water well contractor who decommissions the water well, the pump installation contractor who decommissions the water well, or the owner if the owner decommissions a driven sandpoint well which is on land owned by him or her for farming, ranching, or agricultural purposes or as his or her place of abode, shall provide a properly completed notice of abandonment to the Department of Natural Resources within sixty days. The Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure shall, by rule and regulation, determine which contractor or owner shall be responsible for such notice in situations in which more than one contractor or owner may be required to provide notice under this subsection. The Department of Natural Resources shall not collect a fee for the filing of the notice.

(9) Except for water wells which are used solely for domestic purposes and were constructed before September 9, 1993, and for test holes and dewatering wells used for less than ninety days, each water well which was completed in this state before July 1, 2001, and which is not registered on that date shall be an illegal water well until it is registered with the Department of Natural Resources. Such registration shall be completed by a water well contractor or by the current owner of the water well, shall be on forms provided by the department, and shall provide as much of the information required by subsections (1) through (5) of this section for registration of a new water well as is possible at the time of registration.

(10) Water wells which are or were used solely for injecting any fluid other than water into the underground water reservoir, which were constructed before July 16, 2004, and which

have not been properly decommissioned on or before July 16, 2004, shall be registered on or before July 1, 2005.

46-651

Spacing of water wells; distance.

(1) Except as provided in section 46-653 or 46-654, (a) no irrigation or industrial water well or water well of any other public water supplier shall be drilled within one thousand feet of any registered water well of any public water supplier, (b) no water well of any such public water supplier shall be drilled within one thousand feet of any registered irrigation or industrial water well, (c) no irrigation water well shall be drilled within one thousand feet of a registered industrial water well, and (d) no industrial water well shall be drilled within one thousand feet of a registered irrigation or industrial water well. Such prohibitions shall not apply to water wells owned by the same person.

(2) An existing water well for which a change in the intended use is proposed shall be subject to any spacing requirement in subsection (1) of this section that would apply to the drilling of a new water well at the same location for the new use intended.

(3) The well-spacing protection of subsections (1) and (2) of this section shall apply to an unregistered water well for a period of only sixty days following completion of such water well.

(4) The spacing requirements in subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to any replacement water well if that water well is drilled within fifty feet of the water well being replaced and if the water well being replaced was drilled prior to July 16, 2004, was in compliance with any applicable spacing statute when drilled and when registered, and is less than one thousand feet from the registered water well for which spacing protection is provided.

46-655.01

Public water supplier; notice of intent to consider wellfield; contents; effect; termination.

(1) A public water supplier as defined in section 46-638 may obtain protection for a public water supply

wellfield from encroachment from other water wells by filing with the Department of Natural Resources a notice of intent to consider a wellfield. The notice of intent shall include:

(a) The legal description of the land being considered as a public water supply wellfield; and

(b) Written consent of the owner of the land considered for a public water supply wellfield, allowing the public water supplier to conduct an evaluation as to whether such land is suitable for a public water supply wellfield.

(2) A notice of intent filed under this section shall be limited to a contiguous tract of land. No public water supplier shall have more than three notices of intent under this section on file with the department at any one time.

(3) A notice of intent filed under this section shall expire one year after the date of filing and may be renewed for one additional year by filing with the department a notice of renewal of the original notice of intent filed under this section before expiration of the original notice of intent.

(4) At the time a notice of intent or a notice of renewal is filed with the department, the public water supplier shall:

(a) Provide a copy of the notice of intent or notice of renewal to the owners of all land

adjoining the land being considered for a wellfield falling within the spacing protection provided for in subsection (5)(a) of this section pursuant to the notice;

(b) Provide a copy of the notice to the natural resources district or districts within which the land being considered for a wellfield is located; and

(c) Publish a copy of the notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the area in which the wellfield is being considered.

(5)(a) Except as provided in subdivisions (b) and (c) of this subsection, during the time that a notice of intent under this section is in effect, no person may drill or construct a water well, as defined in section 46-601.01, within the following number of feet of the boundaries of the land described in the notice of intent, whichever is greater:

(i) One thousand feet; or

(ii) The maximum number of feet specified in any applicable regulations of a natural resources district that a well of a public water supplier must be spaced from another well.

(b) Any person who, at least one hundred eighty days prior to filing a notice of intent, obtained a valid permit from a natural resources district to drill or construct a water well within the area subject to the protection provided by this section is not prohibited from drilling or constructing a water

well.

(c) The public water supplier may waive the protection provided by this section and allow a person to drill or construct a new or replacement water well within the area subject to the protection provided by this section.

(6) Within thirty days after the public water supplier reaches a determination that the land described in a particular notice of intent is not suitable for a public water supply wellfield, the public water supplier shall notify the Department of Natural Resources, the affected natural resources district or districts, the owner of the land described in the notice of intent, and the owners of the contiguous tracts of all lands falling within the spacing protection provided by subsection (5)(a) of this section pursuant to affected by the notice of intent of such determination. Upon receipt by the department of the notice of such determination, the notice of intent that contains the description of such tract of land shall terminate immediately, notwithstanding any other provision of this section.

46-683

Permit; issuance; consideration; conditions.

(1) The director shall issue a written order containing specific findings of fact either granting or denying a permit. The director shall grant a permit only if he or she finds that the applicant's withdrawal and any transfer of ground water are in the public interest. In determining whether the withdrawal and transfer, if any, are in the public interest, the director's considerations shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) Possible adverse effects on existing surface or ground water users;

(b) The effect of the withdrawal and any transfer of ground water on surface or ground water supplies needed to meet reasonably anticipated domestic and agricultural demands in the area of the proposed ground water withdrawal;

(c) The availability of alternative sources of surface or ground water reasonably accessible to the applicant in or near the region of the proposed withdrawal or use;

(d) The economic benefit of the applicant's proposed use;

(e) The social and economic benefits of existing uses of surface or ground water in the area of the applicant's

proposed use and any transfer;

(f) Any waivers of liability from existing users filed with the director;

(g) The effects on interstate compacts or decrees and the fulfillment of the provisions of any other state contract or agreement; and

(h) Other factors reasonably affecting the equity of granting the permit.

(2) The director may grant a permit for less water than requested by the applicant. The director may also impose reasonable conditions on the manner and timing of the ground water withdrawals and on the manner of any transfer of ground water which the director deems necessary to protect existing users of water. If a hearing is held, ~~the~~ director shall issue such written order within ninety days of the hearing.

#### 46-691.03

#### **Transfer off overlying land for environmental or recreational benefits; when allowed; application; fee; natural resources district; powers and duties.**

(1) Any person intending to withdraw ground water from any water well located in the State of Nebraska, transport that water off the overlying land, and use it to augment water supplies in any Nebraska wetland or natural stream for the purpose of benefiting fish or wildlife or producing other environmental or recreational benefits may do so only if the natural resources district in which the water well is or would be located allows withdrawals and transport for such purposes and only after applying for and obtaining a permit from such natural resources district. An application for any such permit shall be accompanied by a nonrefundable fee of fifty dollars payable to such district. Such permit shall be in addition to any permit

required pursuant to sections 46-735, 46-739(1)(k), or 46-252.

(2) Prior to taking action on an application pursuant to this section, the district shall provide an opportunity for public comment on such application at a regular or special board meeting for which advance published notice of the meeting and the agenda therefor have been given consistent with the Open Meetings Act.

(3) In determining whether to grant a permit under this section, the board of directors for the natural resources district shall consider:

(a) Whether the proposed use is a beneficial use of ground water;

(b) The availability to the applicant of alternative sources of surface water or ground water for the proposed withdrawal, transport, and use;

(c) Any negative effect of the proposed withdrawal, transport, and use on ground water supplies needed to meet present or reasonable future demands for water in the area of the proposed withdrawal, transport, and use, to comply with any interstate compact or decree, or to fulfill the provisions of any other formal state contract or agreement;

(d) Any negative effect of the proposed withdrawal, transport, and use on surface water supplies needed to meet present or reasonable future demands for water



within the state, to comply with any interstate compact or decree, or to fulfill the provisions of any other formal state contract or agreement;

(e) Any adverse environmental effect of the proposed withdrawal, transport, and use of the ground water;

(f) The cumulative effects of the proposed withdrawal, transport, and use relative to the matters listed in subdivisions(3)(c) through (e) of this section when considered in conjunction with all other withdrawals, transports, and uses subject to this section;

(g) Whether the proposed withdrawal, transport, and use is consistent with the district's ground water quantity and quality management plan and with any integrated management plan previously adopted or being considered for adoption in accordance with sections 46-713 to 46-719; and

(h) Any other factors consistent with the purposes of this section which the board of directors deems relevant to protect the interests of the state and its citizens.

(4) Issuance of a permit shall be conditioned on the applicant's compliance with the rules and regulations of the natural resources district from which the water is to be withdrawn and, if the location where the water is to be used to produce the intended benefits is in a different natural resources district, with the rules and regulations of that natural resources district. The board of directors may include such reasonable conditions on the proposed withdrawal, transport, and use as it deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

(5) The applicant shall be required to provide access to his or her property at reasonable times for purposes of inspection by officials of any district where the water is to be withdrawn or to be used.

#### **Section 46-706**

##### ***Terms, defined.***

For purposes of the Municipal and Rural Domestic Ground Water Transfers Permit Act, the Nebraska Ground Water Management and Protection Act, and sections 46-601 to 46-613.02, 46-636, 46-637, and 46-651 to 46-655, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) Person means a natural person, a partnership, a limited liability company, an association, a corporation, a municipality, an irrigation district, an agency or a political subdivision of the state, or a department, an agency, or a bureau of the United States;

(2) Ground water means that water which occurs in or moves, seeps, filters, or percolates through ground under the surface of the land;

(3) Contamination or contamination of ground water means nitrate nitrogen or other material which enters the ground water due to action of any person and causes degradation of the quality of ground water sufficient to make such ground water unsuitable for present or reasonably foreseeable beneficial uses;

(4) District means a natural resources district operating pursuant to Chapter 2, article 32;

(5) Illegal water well means (a) any water well operated or constructed without or in violation of a permit required by the Nebraska Ground Water Management and Protection Act, (b) any water well not in compliance with rules and regulations adopted and promulgated pursuant to the act, (c) any water well not properly registered in accordance with sections 46-602 to 46-604, or (d) any water well not in compliance with any other applicable laws of the State of Nebraska or with rules and regulations adopted and promulgated pursuant to such laws;

(6) To commence construction of a water well means the beginning of the boring, drilling, jetting, digging, or excavating of the actual water well from which ground water is to be withdrawn;

(7) Management area means any area so designated by a district pursuant to section 46-712 or 46-718, by the Director of Environmental Quality pursuant to section 46-725, or by the Interrelated Water Review Board pursuant to section 46-719. Management area includes a control area or a special ground water quality protection area designated prior to July 19, 1996;

(8) Management plan means a ground water management plan developed by a district and submitted to the Director of Natural Resources for review pursuant to section 46-711;

(9) Ground water reservoir life goal means the finite or infinite period of time which a district establishes as its goal for maintenance of the supply and quality of water in a ground water reservoir at the time a ground water management plan is adopted;

(10) Board means the board of directors of a district;

(11) Acre-inch means the amount of water necessary to cover an acre of land one inch deep;

(12) Subirrigation or subirrigated land means the natural occurrence of a ground water table within the root zone of agricultural vegetation, not exceeding ten feet below the surface of the ground;

(13) Best management practices means schedules of activities, maintenance procedures, and other management practices utilized for purposes of conserving or effecting a savings of ground water, or to prevent or reduce present and future contamination of ground water. Best management practices relating to contamination of ground water ~~which may include, but are not limited to,~~ irrigation scheduling, proper rate and timing of fertilizer application, and other fertilizer and pesticide management programs. In determining the rate of fertilizer application, the district shall consult with the University of Nebraska or a certified crop advisor certified by the American Society of Agronomy;

(14) Point source means any discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance, including, but not limited to, any pipe, channel, tunnel, conduit, well, discrete fissure, container,

rolling stock, vessel, other floating craft, or other conveyance, over which the Department of Environmental Quality has regulatory authority and from which a substance which can cause or contribute to contamination of ground water is or may be discharged;

(15) Allocation, as it relates to water use for irrigation purposes, means the allotment of a specified total number of acre-inches of irrigation water per irrigated acre per year or an average number of acre-inches of irrigation water per irrigated acre over any reasonable period of time;

(16) Rotation means a recurring series of use and nonuse of irrigation wells on an hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis;

(17) Water well has the same meaning as in section 46-601.01;

(18) Surface water project sponsor means an irrigation district created pursuant to Chapter 46, article 1, a reclamation district created pursuant to Chapter 46, article 5, or a public power and irrigation district created pursuant to Chapter 70, article 6;

(19) Beneficial use means that use by which water may be put to use to the benefit of humans or other species;

(20) Consumptive use means the amount of water that is consumed under appropriate and reasonably efficient practices to accomplish without waste the purposes for which the appropriation or other legally permitted use is lawfully made;

(21) Dewatering well means a well constructed and used solely for the purpose of lowering the ground water table elevation;

(22) Emergency situation means any set of circumstances that requires the use of water from any source that might otherwise be regulated or prohibited and the agency, district, or organization responsible for regulating water use from such source reasonably and in good faith believes that such use is necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare, including, if applicable, compliance with federal or state water quality standards;

(23) Good cause shown means a reasonable justification for granting a variance for a consumptive use of water that would otherwise be prohibited by rule or regulation and which the granting agency, district, or organization reasonably and in good faith believes will provide an economic, environmental, social, or public health and safety benefit that is equal to or greater than the benefit resulting from the rule or regulation from which a variance is sought;

(24) Historic consumptive use means the amount of water that has previously been consumed under appropriate and reasonably efficient practices to accomplish without waste the purposes for which the appropriation or other legally permitted use was lawfully made;

(25) Monitoring well means a water well that is designed and constructed to provide ongoing hydrologic or water quality information and is not intended for consumptive use;

(26) Order, except as otherwise specifically provided, includes any order required by the Nebraska Ground Water Management and Protection Act, by rule or regulation, or by a decision adopted by a district by vote of the board of directors of the district taken at any regularly scheduled or specially scheduled meeting of the board;

(27) Overall difference between the current and fully appropriated levels of development means the extent to which existing uses of hydrologically connected surface water and ground water and conservation activities result in the water supply available for purposes identified in subsection (3) of section 46-713 to be less than the water supply available if the river basin, subbasin, or reach had been determined to be fully appropriated in accordance with section 46-714;

(28) Test hole means a hole designed solely for the purposes of obtaining information on hydrologic or geologic conditions; and

(29) Variance means (a) the approval to deviate from a restriction imposed under the provisions of Section 46-714(1), (2), (9), or (10); or (b) the approval to act in a manner contrary to existing rules or regulations from a governing body whose rule or regulation is otherwise applicable.

46-715

River basin, subbasin, or reach; integrated management plan; considerations; contents; amendment; technical analysis.

(1) Whenever the Department of Natural Resources has designated a river basin, subbasin, or reach as overappropriated or has made a final determination that a river basin, subbasin, or reach is fully appropriated, the natural resources districts encompassing such river basin, subbasin, or reach and the department shall jointly develop an integrated management plan for such river basin, subbasin, or reach. The plan shall be completed, adopted, and take effect within three years after such designation or final determination unless the department and the natural resources districts jointly agree to an extension of not more than two additional years.

(2) In developing an integrated management plan, the

effects of existing and potential new water uses on existing surface water appropriators and ground water users shall be considered. An integrated management plan shall include the following: (a) Clear goals and objectives with a purpose of sustaining a balance between water uses and water supplies so that the economic viability, social and environmental health, safety, and welfare of the river basin, subbasin, or reach can be achieved and maintained for both the near term and the long term; (b) a map clearly delineating the geographic area subject to the integrated management plan; (c) one or more of the ground water controls authorized for adoption by natural resources districts pursuant to section 46-739; and (d) one or more of the surface water controls authorized for adoption by the department pursuant to section 46-716. The plan may also provide for utilization of any applicable incentive programs authorized by law. Nothing in the integrated management plan for a fully appropriated river basin, subbasin, or reach shall require a natural resources district to regulate ground water uses in place at the time of the department's preliminary determination that the river basin, subbasin, or reach is fully appropriated, but a natural resources district may voluntarily adopt such regulations; provided, this exception shall not apply to determinations when section 46-720 is applicable.

*if not goes further in final "but" of*

*applicable to n rd subject to interstate compact.*

(3) The ground water and surface water controls proposed for adoption in the integrated management plan pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall, when considered together and with any applicable incentive programs, (a) be consistent with the goals and objectives of the plan, (b) be sufficient to ensure that the state will remain in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and with any applicable interstate water compact or decree or other formal state contract or agreement pertaining to surface water or ground water use or supplies, and (c) protect the ground water users whose water wells are dependent on recharge from the river or stream involved and the surface water appropriators on such river or stream from streamflow depletion caused by surface water uses and ground water uses begun after the date the river basin, subbasin, or reach was designated as overappropriated or was preliminarily determined to be fully appropriated in accordance with section 46-713.

*if regulation is req'd to meet the terms of an interstate compact or decree.*

(4)(a) In any river basin, subbasin, or reach that is designated as overappropriated, when the designated area lies within two or more natural resources districts, the department and the affected natural resources districts shall jointly develop a basin-wide plan for the area designated as overappropriated. Such plan shall be developed using the consultation and collaboration process described in subdivision

(b) of this subsection, shall be developed concurrently with the development of the integrated management plan required pursuant to subsections (1) through (3) of this section, and shall be designed to achieve, in the incremental manner described in subdivision (d) of this subsection, the goals and objectives described in subsection (2) of this section. The basin-wide plan shall be adopted after hearings by the department and the affected natural resources districts.

(b) In any river basin, subbasin, or reach designated as overappropriated and subject to this subsection, the department and each natural resources district encompassing such river basin, subbasin, or reach shall jointly develop an integrated management plan for such river basin, subbasin, or reach pursuant to subsections (1) through (3) of this section. Each integrated management plan for a river basin, subbasin, or reach subject to this subsection shall be consistent with any basin-wide plan developed pursuant to subdivision (a) of this subsection. Such integrated management plan shall be developed after consultation and collaboration with irrigation districts, reclamation districts, public power and irrigation districts, mutual irrigation companies, canal companies, and municipalities that rely on water from within the affected area and that, after being notified of the commencement of the plan development process, indicate in writing their desire to participate in such process. In addition, the department or the affected natural resources districts may include designated representatives of other stakeholders. If agreement is reached by all parties involved in such consultation and collaboration process, the department and each natural resources district shall adopt the agreed-upon integrated management plan. If agreement cannot be reached by all parties involved, the integrated management plan shall be developed and adopted by the department and the affected natural resources district pursuant to sections 46-715 to 46-718 or by the Interrelated Water Review Board pursuant to section 46-719.

(c) Any integrated management plan developed under this subsection shall identify the overall difference between the current and fully appropriated levels of development. Such determination shall take into account cyclical supply, including drought, identify the portion of the overall difference between the current and fully appropriated levels of development that is due to conservation measures, and identify the portions of the overall difference between the current and fully appropriated levels of development that are due to water use initiated prior to July 1, 1997, and to water use initiated on or after such date.

(d) Any integrated management plan developed under this subsection shall adopt an incremental approach to achieve the goals and objectives identified under subdivision (2)(a) of this section using the following steps:

(i) The first incremental goals shall be to address the impact of streamflow depletions to (A) surface water appropriations and (B) water wells constructed in aquifers dependent upon recharge from streamflow, to the extent those depletions are due to water use initiated after July 1, 1997, and, unless an interstate cooperative agreement for such river basin, subbasin, or reach is no longer in effect, to prevent streamflow depletions that would cause noncompliance by Nebraska with such interstate cooperative agreement. During the first increment, the department and the affected natural resources districts shall also pursue voluntary efforts, subject to the availability of funds, to offset any increase in streamflow depletive effects that occur after July 1, 1997, but are caused by ground water uses initiated prior to such date. The department and the affected natural resources districts may also use other appropriate and authorized measures for such purpose;

(ii) The department and the affected natural resources districts may amend an integrated management plan subject to this subsection (4) as necessary based on an annual review of the progress being made toward achieving the goals for that increment;

(iii) During the ten years following adoption of an integrated management plan developed under this subsection (4) or during the ten years after the adoption of any subsequent increment of the integrated management plan pursuant to subdivision (d)(iv) of this subsection, the department and the affected natural resources district shall conduct a technical analysis of the actions taken in such increment to determine the progress towards meeting the goals and objectives adopted pursuant to subsection (2) of this section. The analysis shall include an examination of (A) available supplies and changes in long-term availability, (B) the effects of conservation practices and natural causes, including, but not limited to, drought, and (C) the effects of the plan on reducing the overall difference between the current and fully appropriated levels of development identified in subdivision (4)(c) of this section. The analysis shall determine whether a subsequent increment is necessary in the integrated management plan to meet the goals and objectives adopted pursuant to subsection (2) of this section and reduce the overall difference between the current and fully appropriated levels of development identified in subdivision (4)(c) of this section;

(iv) Based on the determination made in subdivision (d)(iii) of this subsection, the department and the affected natural resources districts, utilizing the consultative and collaborative process described in subdivision (b) of this subsection, shall if necessary identify goals for a subsequent increment of the integrated management plan. Subsequent increments shall be completed, adopted, and take effect not more than ten years after adoption of the previous increment; and

(v) If necessary, the steps described in subdivisions (d)(ii) through (iv) of this subsection shall be repeated until the department and the affected natural resources districts agree that the goals and objectives identified pursuant to subsection (2) of this section have been met and the overall difference between the current and fully appropriated levels of development identified in subdivision (4)(c) of this section has been addressed so that the river basin, subbasin, or reach has returned to a fully appropriated condition.

46-719

Interrelated Water Review Board; created; members; powers and duties.

(1)(a) The Interrelated Water Review Board is created for the purposes stated in subsections (2) through (5) of this section. The board shall consist of five members. The board, when appointed and convened, shall continue in existence only until it has resolved a dispute referred to it pursuant to such subsections. The Governor shall appoint and convene the board within forty-five days of being notified of the need to resolve a dispute. The board shall be chaired by the Governor or his or her designee, which designee shall be knowledgeable concerning surface water and ground water issues. The Governor shall appoint one additional member of his or her choosing and shall appoint the other three members of the board from a list of no fewer than six nominees provided by the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission within twenty days after request by the Governor for a list of nominees.

(b) Not more than two members of the board shall reside in the geographic area involved in the dispute. A person is not eligible for membership on the board if the decisions to be made by the board would or could cause financial benefit or detriment to the person, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which the person is associated, unless such benefit



or detriment is indistinguishable from the effects of such action on the public generally or a broad segment of the public. The board shall be subject to the Open Meetings Act.

(c) For purposes of subsections (2) and (3) of this section, action may be taken by a vote of three of the board's five members. For purposes of subsections (4) and (5) of this section, action may be taken only by a vote of at least four of the board's five members.

(2)(a) If the Department of Natural Resources and the affected natural resources districts cannot resolve disputes over the content of a basin-wide plan or an integrated management plan by utilizing the process described in sections 46-715 to 46-718, the Governor shall be notified and the dispute submitted to the Interrelated Water Review Board. When the board has been appointed and convened to resolve disputes over a basin-wide plan, the department and each affected district shall present their proposed basin-wide plans to the board. When the board has been convened to resolve disputes over an integrated management plan, the department and each affected natural resources district shall present their (i) proposed goals and objectives for the integrated management plan, (ii) proposed geographic area to be subject to controls, and (iii) proposed surface water and ground water controls and any proposed incentive program for adoption and implementation in the river basin, subbasin, or reach involved. The department and each affected natural resources district shall also be given adequate opportunity to comment on the proposals made by the other parties to the dispute.

(b) When the Interrelated Water Review Board concludes that the issues in dispute have been fully presented and commented upon by the parties to the dispute, which conclusion shall be made not more than forty-five days after the board is convened, the board shall select the proposals or portions of proposals that the board will consider for adoption and shall schedule one or more public hearings to take testimony on the selected proposals. The hearings shall be held within forty-five days after the board's selection of proposals to consider for adoption and shall be within or in reasonable proximity to the area that would be affected by implementation of any of the proposals to be considered at the hearings. Notice of the hearings shall be published as provided in section 46-743. The cost of publishing the notice shall be shared by the department and the affected natural resources districts. All interested persons may appear at the hearings and present testimony or provide other evidence relevant to the issues being considered.

(c) Within forty-five days after the final hearing pursuant to subdivision (b) of this subsection, the Interrelated

Water Review Board shall by order, as applicable, adopt a basin-wide plan or an integrated management plan for the affected river basin, subbasin, or reach and, in the case of an integrated management plan, shall designate a ground water management ~~plan~~area for integrated management or an integrated management subarea for such river basin, subbasin, or reach. An integrated management plan shall be consistent with subsection (2) of section 46-715, and the surface water and ground water controls and any applicable incentive programs adopted as part of that plan shall be consistent with subsection (3) of section 46-715. The controls adopted by the board shall not be substantially different from those described in the notice of hearing. The area designated as a ground water management area or an integrated management subarea shall not include any area that was not identified in the notice of the hearing as within the area proposed to be subject to the controls in the plan.

(d) The order adopted under this subsection shall be published in the manner prescribed in section 46-744.

(e) Surface water controls adopted by the Interrelated Water Review Board shall be implemented and enforced by the department. Ground water controls adopted by the Interrelated Water Review Board shall be implemented and enforced by the affected natural resources districts.

(3) Whether an integrated management plan is adopted pursuant to section 46-718 or by the Interrelated Water Review Board pursuant to subsection (2) of this section, the department or a natural resources district responsible in part for implementation and enforcement of an integrated management plan may propose modification of the goals or objectives of that plan, of the area subject to the plan, or of the surface water controls, ground water controls, or incentive programs adopted to implement the plan. The department and the affected natural resources districts shall utilize the procedures in sections 46-715 to 46-718 in an attempt to reach agreement on and to adopt and implement proposed modifications. If agreement on such modifications cannot be achieved utilizing those procedures, either the department or an affected natural resources district may notify the Governor of the dispute. The Interrelated Water Review Board shall be appointed and convened in accordance with subsection (1) of this section to resolve the dispute and, if applicable, to adopt any modifications utilizing the procedures in subsection (2) of this section.

(4) The department and the affected natural resources districts may also raise objections concerning the implementation or enforcement of previously adopted surface water or ground water controls. The department and the affected natural

resources districts shall utilize the procedures in sections 46-715 to 46-718 in an attempt to reach agreement on such implementation or enforcement issues. If agreement on such issues cannot be achieved utilizing such procedures, either the department or an affected natural resources district may notify the Governor of the dispute. The Interrelated Water Review Board shall be appointed and convened in accordance with subsection (1) of this section. After permitting each party to fully express its reasons for its position on the disputed issues, the board may either take no action or conclude (a) that one or more parties needs to modify its approach to implementation or enforcement and direct that such modifications take place or (b) that one or more parties either has not made a good faith effort to implement or enforce the portion of the plan or controls for which it is responsible or is unable to fully implement and enforce such portion and that such party's jurisdiction with respect to implementation and enforcement of the plan and controls shall be terminated and reassigned to one or more of the other parties responsible for implementation and enforcement. A decision by the Interrelated Water Review Board to terminate and reassign jurisdiction of any portion of the plan or controls shall take effect immediately upon that decision. Notice of such reassignment shall be published at least once in one or more newspapers as necessary to provide general circulation in the area affected by such reassignment.

(5) The board may be reconvened in accordance with subsection (1) of this section at a later date upon request to the Governor by the party for which jurisdiction for implementation and enforcement was terminated if such party desires to have its jurisdiction reinstated, but no such request shall be honored until at least one year after the termination and not more than once per year thereafter. The board may reinstate jurisdiction to that party only upon a clear showing by such party that it is willing and able to fully implement and enforce the plan and any applicable controls. Notice that a party's jurisdiction has been reinstated shall be provided in the same manner that notice of the earlier termination was given.

46-743

Public hearing; requirements.

Any public hearing required under the Nebraska Ground Water Management and Protection Act shall comply with the following requirements:

(1) The hearing shall be located within or in reasonable proximity to the area proposed for designation as a management area or affected by the proposed rule or regulation;

(2) Notice of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper published or of general circulation in the affected area at least once each week for three consecutive weeks, the last publication of which shall be not less than seven days prior to the hearing;

(3) As to the designation of a management area, adoption or amendment of an action plan or integrated management plan, or adoption or amendment of controls, the notice shall provide, as applicable, a general description of (a) the contents of the plan, (b) the geographic area which will be considered for inclusion in the management area, and (c) a general description of all controls proposed for adoption or amendment and shall identify all locations where a copy of the full text of the proposed plan or controls may be obtained;

(4) For all other rules and regulations, the notice shall provide a general description of the contents of the rules and regulations proposed for adoption or amendment and shall identify all locations where a copy of the full text of the proposed rules and regulations may be obtained;

(5) The full text of all controls, rules, or regulations shall be available to the public upon request not later than the date of first publication;

(6) All interested persons shall be allowed to appear and present testimony; and

(7) The hearing ~~shall~~ may include testimony of a representative of the Department of Natural Resources and, if the primary purpose of the proposed management area is protection of water quality, testimony of a representative of the Department of Environmental Quality and shall include the results of any relevant water quality studies or investigations conducted by the district.

#### **61-205**

#### **Department of Natural Resources; general grant of authority.**

The Department of Natural Resources shall exercise the powers and perform the duties assigned to the Department of Water Resources prior to July 1, 2000. The Department of Natural Resources shall exercise the powers and perform the duties assigned to the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission prior to July 1, 2000, except as otherwise specifically provided.

The Director of Natural Resources and his or her duly authorized assistants shall have access at all reasonable times to all dams, reservoirs, hydroelectric plants, water

| measuring devices, and headgates, and other devices for diverting water, for the purpose of performing the duties assigned to the department.