

Options for a Water Conservation and Protection Ballot Initiative

Option #1 – 1/8 of 1% Dedicated Sales Tax*

Revenue Generated = \$21.25 Million**

Uses

*DK: if negative
- NKB - leave
it out,
turn -- not a
possibility to fund*

- \$15,500,000 to fund LB 962 related needs.
 - \$10,000,000 to retire irrigated acres in over-appropriated basins
 - \$4,000,000 for fully-appropriated basins
 - \$1,500,000 for research and administration
- \$2,500,000 to provide state matching funds for the Central Basins Conservation Enhancement Reserve Program (CBCREP). This Farm Bill Program which requires a 20% state match, has a goal to install up to 55,000 acres of buffer strips for water quality, and restore/protect up to 20,000 acres of wetlands in 37 south central Nebraska counties over 15 years.
- \$2,250,000 for Watershed Planning and Protection, to be administered by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). These funds could be used for lake restoration which benefits water-based recreation, for projects addressing non-point source pollution that benefit water quality, and for watershed master plans that address water quality and flood protection issues involved in stormwater management.
- \$1,000,000 for competitive grants that fund innovative water conservation, protection, and education projects, to be administered by the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund (NETF).

* A 1/8 of a percent increase would require a change in state statute, which currently requires increases to be taken in 1/4 increments.

** Figure provided by the Department of Revenue.

*ASB - \$ for Water Tr. Fund?
D Sands - assumed 15.5M*

Option #2 – ¼ of 1% Dedicated Sales Tax

Revenue Generated = \$42.5 Million

Uses

- \$15,500,000 to fund LB 962 related needs (same breakdown as above). → NR TF
- \$3,000,000 to provide state matching funds for the CBCREP, for buffer strips and wetlands in south central Nebraska. } Pivot corner concept. J turn - rate has to go up.
- \$4,000,000 for Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), for state parks that provide water based recreation and for the leasing of water in irrigation reservoirs to maintain minimum pools for recreation, fish, and wildlife. ↳ OK - would differ.
- \$5,000,000 for Watershed Planning and Protection to be administered by the NDEQ, for projects that renovate lakes for recreation and/or protect water bodies from non-point source pollution.
- \$2,000,000 for competitive grants to be administered by the NETF for innovative water conservation, protection, and education projects.
- \$3,000,000 for the Water Resources Development Fund, to build recreation and flood control projects. } RB - other funds will drop off.
- \$4,000,000 for a new Water Conservation Fund, to cost share on projects that conserve water quantity, from landowners to municipalities.
- \$6,000,000 to purchase conservation easements from willing sellers, that protect rivers, streams, and wetlands of local, state, or national importance, as designated by NRDs, state and federal government. These funds could be administered by a board of state agencies, or the NETF. The easements could serve to:
 - Protect urban watersheds from development, providing wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, buffers for water quality, and flood control.
 - Insure wellhead protection for community drinking water wells.
 - Buffer important drinking water sources like the lower Platte River from the non-point pollution that comes with encroaching development.
 - Permanently protect wetlands in areas like the Rainwater Basin or Missouri Valley, which are important for migratory waterfowl.
 - Preserve crane habitat in the central Platte Valley.
 - Protect scenic views and wildlife habitat along the Niobrara National Scenic River, by preventing ranches from being subdivided for development.

Gierra suggests, acq. of flood-prone lands.