

# **UNANNOTATED**

## **CHAPTER 73 Special Districts**

### **ARTICLE 1 Artesian Conservancy Districts**

#### **73-1-1. [Purpose of districts.]**

The purpose of this act [73-1-1 to 73-1-13 and 73-1-16 to 73-1-23 NMSA 1978] is to provide for the organization of artesian conservancy districts to conserve, where necessary, the waters in any artesian basin or basins within the state, the boundaries of which have been scientifically determined by investigations, and where such waters have been beneficially appropriated for private, public, domestic, commercial or irrigation purposes, or otherwise.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-1301; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-1.

#### **73-1-2. [Lands included in district; two or more artesian basins in one district.]**

Any artesian conservancy district organized pursuant to the provisions of this act [73-1-1 to 73-1-13 and 73-1-16 to 73-1-23 NMSA 1978] shall include all lands overlying any such artesian basin and any land outside of the boundaries thereof upon which waters from such basin are being used, either for private, public, commercial, domestic or irrigation purposes, or otherwise.

Two or more such artesian basins or reservoirs may be embraced in the same conservancy district, where the same are so closely related, geographically or otherwise, that the waters therein can more surely and effectively be conserved by the unified control of one district, and where the improvements contemplated will tend to conserve the waters in each basin so included.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-1302; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-2.

#### **73-1-3. [Petition; signers; contents of petition.]**

In order to establish an artesian conservancy district under this act [73-1-1 to 73-1-13 and 73-1-16 to 73-1-23 NMSA 1978], a petition shall be filed in the district court of the county wherein the greater portion of the lands to be embraced in the district are situated, the same to be signed by the owners of more than one-third (1/3) of the real property in such proposed district, in either acreage or value as shown by the last

preceding assessment roll in the county, or counties, wherein such district is proposed to be created. Such petition may be signed by any person, firm, association, corporation or the officers duly authorized of any town, village, city or municipality owning lands within the proposed district. Any city interested in some degree in the improvements or purposes for which a district is to be formed, may, upon proper action of its governing body alone, file the petition required by this section; provided, the population and businesses conducted in such city own at least one-third (1/3) of the lands within said district in either acreage or value as shown by the last preceding assessment roll of the county, or counties, wherein such district is proposed to be created.

The petition shall set forth:

A. the proposed name of the district;

B. a statement of the purpose, or purposes, for which the district is to be formed, and showing wherein the property within the proposed district will be benefited by the accomplishment of some one or more of the purposes enumerated, and giving a general description of the property to be included in the proposed district. Such description need not be given by metes and bounds, or by legal subdivisions, but it shall be sufficient if it enable a property owner to ascertain whether his property is within the territory proposed to be organized as a district, and it need not be necessary that all the property embraced within the district be contiguous;

C. said petition shall pray for the organization of the district by the name proposed.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-1303; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-3.

#### **73-1-4. [Correction of errors in petition.]**

No petition with the requisite signatures shall be declared null and void on account of alleged defects, but the court may, at any time, permit the petition to be amended to conform to the facts, by correcting any errors in description or in any other particular.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-1304; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-4.

#### **73-1-5. [More than one petition for same district.]**

Several similar petitions, or duplicate copies of the same petition, for the organization of the same district may be filed, and shall together be regarded as one petition. All such petitions filed prior to the hearing on the first petition filed shall be considered by the court the same as though filed with the first petition.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 77-1305; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-5.

#### **73-1-6. Signing of petition.**

A guardian, conservator or personal representative of an estate, who is appointed as such under the laws of this state, and who, as such guardian, conservator or personal representative, is entitled to the possession of the lands belonging to the estate which he represents may, on behalf of his ward or the estate he represents, upon being thereunto authorized by the proper court, sign and acknowledge the petition in this act [73-1-1 to 73-1-13 and 73-1-16 to 73-1-23 NMSA 1978] mentioned, and may act in respect to the said lands to the same extent, and in the same manner, as a private owner might act.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 77-1306; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-6; Laws 1975, ch. 257, § 8-127.

### **73-1-7. [Tax roll as prima facie evidence of property ownership and value.]**

In determining whether a requisite number of landowners have signed the petition, the court shall be governed by the names and the value of the property as they appear upon the tax or assessment rolls which shall be prima facie evidence of such ownership and value.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 77-1307; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-7.

### **73-1-8. [Bond; sufficiency; failure to execute additional bond when required.]**

At the time of filing the petition, or at any time subsequent thereto and prior to the time of hearing on said petition, a bond shall be filed, with security approved by the court sufficient to pay all the expenses connected with the proceedings in case the organization of the district be not effected. If, at any time during the proceeding, the court shall be satisfied that the bond first executed is not sufficient, it may require the execution of an additional bond within a time to be fixed, which shall not be less than ten days from the date of such order, and upon failure of the petitioners to execute the same, the petition shall be dismissed.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 8; 1941 Comp., § 77-1308; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-8.

### **73-1-9. [Hearing; time and place; publication of notice.]**

Immediately after the filing of such petition, the court shall, by order, fix a time and place, not less than sixty (60) days after the petition is filed, for hearing thereon, and thereupon the clerk shall cause notice by publication to be made of the pendency of the petition, and of the time and place of the hearing thereon, in each county in which there is property to be included in the proposed district. If no newspaper is published in any such county, publication shall be made in a newspaper of general circulation in the proposed district.

It shall not be necessary for the clerk to name the parties interested, nor to describe separate lots, tracts or parcels of land in giving such notice, but it shall be sufficient to give such descriptions as to enable the owner to determine whether or not his land is covered by such description. The notice shall state that all persons, corporations and municipalities, or others owning or interested in any property within the proposed district, will be given the opportunity to be heard at the time and place specified in the notice. Publication shall be made as directed by the court, but shall be for at least once each week for four consecutive weeks.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 9; 1941 Comp., § 77-1309; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-9.

### **73-1-10. [Filing of objections; hearing as advanced cause.]**

Any owner of real property, or any public corporation in said proposed district, not having individually signed a petition for the organization and incorporation of said district may, on or before the date set for the cause to be heard, file objections to the organization and incorporation of such district. Such objections shall be heard by the court as an advanced cause without unnecessary delay.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 10; 1941 Comp., § 77-1310; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-10.

### **73-1-11. [District declared organized; boundaries; status; principal place of business; jurisdiction of court; costs where petition denied.]**

Upon the hearing of the petition, as provided for herein, if it shall appear that a petition, or petitions, for the organization of such district has been signed and presented as hereinbefore provided, and that the allegations of the petition, or petitions, are true and that no protesting petition, or petitions, have been filed, or, if filed have been dismissed, the court shall, by order, adjudicate all questions of jurisdiction, declare the district organized and give it a corporate name, by which, in all proceedings, it shall thereafter be known, but said decree shall not be final as to the boundaries of said district, or as to the lands to be embraced therein, until the approval of the report of the commissioners, as hereinafter provided, at which time, a final decree as to the property to be embraced in the district shall be entered, and no appeal therefrom as to any particular tracts or parcels of property shall, in any way, prevent the district from functioning, nor prevent the levy of any taxes against such property in question pending the appeal therefrom.

Upon declaring the district organized, the same shall be a political subdivision of the state of New Mexico, and a body corporate with all the powers of a public or municipal corporation; shall have power to sue and be sued, to incur debts, liabilities and obligations, to exercise the right of eminent domain and of taxation and assessment as herein provided and to do and perform all acts herein expressly authorized, and all other acts necessary and proper for carrying out to all intents and purposes the objects for which the district was created, and for exercising the powers with which it is invested.

In such decree, the court shall designate the place where the office, or principal place of business, shall be located, which shall be within the corporate limits of the district, if practical, and which may be changed by order of the court from time to time. The regular meetings of the board of directors shall be held at such office or place of business, but for cause may be adjourned to any other convenient place. The official records and files of the district shall be kept at the office so established. The district court entering the decree shall retain jurisdiction of the conservancy district so organized, and all court proceedings pertaining to the district, as herein provided, shall be filed in the original cause. Any district judge in whose court said original proceeding is had shall not be disqualified on account of owning property within the boundaries of the district.

If the court finds against the prayer of the petition, it shall dismiss said proceedings and adjudge the costs against the signers of the petition in such proportions as it shall deem just and equitable.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 11; 1941 Comp., § 77-1311; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-11.

### **73-1-12. Recording of findings and decree; fees.**

As soon as practical and within thirty days after the district has been declared a corporation by the court, the clerk of the court shall transmit to the secretary of state and to the county clerk of each of the counties having lands in the district certified copies of the findings and the decree of the court incorporating the district. The copies shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state, and copies shall also be filed in the office of the county clerk of each county in which a part of the district may be, where they shall become permanent records. The clerk in each county shall receive a fee of one dollar (\$1.00) for filing and preserving the copies. The secretary of state shall receive a fee of five dollars (\$5.00) for filing and preserving the copies.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 12; 1941 Comp., § 77-1312; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-12; 2013, ch. 75, § 44.

### **73-1-13. [Commissioners; property included in district; directors' districts; election code; compensation of commissioners; employees; expenses.]**

Within ten (10) days after entering the decree declaring the district organized, the court shall appoint three (3) owners of lands within the district, representative of all parts of the district, to determine and define the boundaries of such district and to make up a list of the property to be embraced and included in the district, the persons so appointed to be hereinafter referred to as the "commissioners".

Said commissioners shall include all property in the district which has, within four years, received some benefit, either directly or indirectly, from the artesian waters underlying the district, or which may be benefited in some degree by the improvements

to be made by the district. Property benefited by the artesian waters, and the improvements to be made by the district, shall include property upon which waters from such basin, or basins, is, or may be, used for irrigation, domestic, public or commercial purposes, and shall include any such property, whether the same be owned by an individual, corporation, village, town, city or other municipality or public corporation.

The commissioners in making up a description of the property and list of owners thereof to be embraced in, or affected by, the district, shall have access to the assessment or tax rolls of the county, or counties, wherein the lands are situated, and may hear and determine all protests concerning any particular tract or parcel of land to be included in the district, at such time, and in such manner and upon such notice, as they may prescribe, subject to the right of appeal to the district court, which appeal shall be heard and determined by said court at the time provided for the entering of the final decree respecting the boundaries of the district and property to be embraced therein, as herein provided, and after completing such list and defining the boundaries of the district and the lands to be embraced therein, said commissioners shall, with the approval of the court, divide said district into five (5) sections, or divisions, having due regard for the value and amount of acreage to be included in each, so that there will be an equitable relationship in value and acreage between the several sections, or subdivisions, of the district. Said subdivisions shall be numbered one to five, and shall be known as "directors' districts".

The commissioners shall draft an election code to govern the method and prescribe the procedure for the election of directors from each of the directors' districts. Said code shall provide for the election of a director from each of said districts by popular vote of the property owners in the same respectively, owning property affected by the district, and whether residing therein or not. Each director, so elected, at the time of his election must be a freeholder in the district from which he is elected. After being approved by the court, as hereinafter provided, the said election code may be changed only by unanimous consent of the directors elected pursuant thereto.

Said list of property, and the election code, shall be approved by the court, by entering a decree as herein provided, but said list shall be subject to the correction of errors in description of the property affected at any time upon order of the court. A copy of the election code, as approved, shall be filed in the original court proceeding, and the same ordered printed for use of those desiring copies, the cost of which shall be taxed as costs in the proceeding. The commissioners so appointed are hereby vested with full power and authority to employ, with the approval of the court, legal counsel, clerical and stenographic help necessary for carrying out their duties as herein prescribed, the compensation of such employees to be fixed by the court. The commissioners shall each receive five (\$5.00) dollars for each day's service in performing their duties, but not to exceed one hundred and fifty (\$150.00) dollars each. The expenses incurred by said commissioners, and the salaries of their employees and their compensation, shall also be taxed as costs in the original proceeding, and said commissioners are hereby authorized to borrow, with the approval of the court, an amount sufficient to pay all costs of the proceedings so taxed, at a rate of interest not to exceed eight (8%) percent,

which said loan shall be a debt, charge and valid obligation of the district, to be paid out of the proceeds from the first tax levy hereinafter provided for.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 13; 1941 Comp., § 77-1313; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-13.

### **73-1-14. [Inclusion of additional lands after extension of basin boundaries.]**

Where any artesian conservancy district has heretofore been formed, and due to the extension of the original boundaries of the artesian basin by order of the state engineer, the boundaries of the artesian conservancy district no longer include all lands overlying such artesian basin and the board of directors of such district shall determine by resolution that it is desirable that such lands, as are irrigated and within the boundaries of the said artesian basin as set by order of the state engineer effective January 31, 1950, shall be included in and subject to the district, such conservancy district may file a petition in the district court of the county wherein said district was originally formed in the same proceeding, praying that the decree providing for the formation of said district be amended so as to include such lands; provided, however, the petition shall be accompanied by a certificate of the state engineer, describing the designated boundaries of the said artesian basin.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-13-13.1, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 208, § 1.

### **73-1-15. [District court procedure; notice.]**

Upon the filing of a petition as provided for in Section 1 [73-1-14 NMSA 1978] hereof, the district court having jurisdiction shall, by order, require notice to be published by the clerk of the court, at such time and places as the court may designate, giving notice to all landowners affected by the proposed change that a hearing will be had at a time and place designated in such notice, for the purpose of determining whether or not all of the lands described in the certificate of the state engineer filed with the said petition should be included in the artesian conservancy district, and the decree establishing the district amended accordingly. It shall not be necessary for the clerk to name the parties interested, nor to describe the separate lots, tracts or parcels of land affected in giving such notice, but it shall be sufficient to give such description of the lands proposed to be included as will enable the owner to determine whether or not his land is covered by such description.

The notice shall state that any person affected by the proposed inclusion of such lands shall have the right to file objections thereto, on or before the date set for hearing. If, after hearing such objections, if any, and considering any evidence introduced in support thereof, the court finds that the said lands described in the petition should be included within the said artesian conservancy district, the court shall enter an order amending said decree, as prayed for in said petition, and thereupon said lands shall be included within the said conservancy district and shall be subject to the same rights,

powers and authority as given by law to such artesian conservancy district over lands located within said district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-13-13.2, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 208, § 2.

### **73-1-16. [Directors; term of office; vacancies on board.]**

The directors elected pursuant to such election code shall be elected for a term of six years each. Each director shall hold office for the term for which he was elected, and until his successor is duly appointed, or elected, and has qualified, except as hereinafter provided, being removable therefrom only for cause after a hearing upon a motion filed by any interested person in the original proceeding in which the district was organized. Unless otherwise provided by the election code, vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the district court having jurisdiction. Upon the election of the first board of directors, the directors shall draw numbers by lot; numbers one (1) and two (2) shall serve two (2) years; numbers three (3) and four (4) shall serve four (4) years, and number five (5) six (6) years.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 14; 1941 Comp., § 77-1314; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-14.

### **73-1-17. [Board of directors; oath of office; officers; seal; records; bylaws.]**

As soon as practical after the election, the directors shall meet for the purpose of organizing the board of directors. Each director, before entering upon his official duties, shall take and subscribe to an oath before an officer authorized to administer oaths, that he will honestly, faithfully and impartially perform the duties of his office, and that he will not be interested, directly or indirectly, in any contract let by said district, which said oath shall be filed in the original court proceeding for the formation of the district.

Upon taking the oath, the board shall choose one of their members chairman of the board and president of the district, and shall elect some suitable person secretary and treasurer of the board, who may, or may not, be a member of the board and shall require of the said secretary and treasurer a bond conditioned for the faithful performance of his duties, in such amount as to the directors may be deemed to be adequate for the protection of the district.

Such board shall adopt a seal, and shall keep, in a well-bound book, a record of all its proceedings, minutes of all meetings, certificates, contracts, bonds given by employees and all corporate acts, which shall be open to the inspection of all owners of property in the district, as well as to all other interested parties. It shall adopt a set of bylaws not inconsistent with the provisions of this act [73-1-1 to 73-1-13 and 73-1-16 to 73-1-23 NMSA 1978] for the conduct of the business and affairs of the district, and, when adopted, the same shall not be altered, amended or repealed except upon three (3) days' notice to each member of the board, service to be had by personal delivery or by mailing a copy of such notice in a sealed envelope, postage fully prepaid, to the



address of the director to be served, or at a regular or called meeting at which all directors are present.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 15; 1941 Comp., § 77-1315; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-15.

### **73-1-18. [Majority to constitute quorum; concurrence of majority.]**

A majority of the directors shall constitute a quorum, and a concurrence of the majority in any matter within their duties shall be sufficient for its determination.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 16; 1941 Comp., § 77-1316; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-16.

### **73-1-19. [Secretary; duties; board of directors; powers; expenses.]**

The secretary shall be the custodian of the records of the district and of its corporate seal, and shall assist the board in such particulars as it may direct in the performance of its duties. The secretary shall attest, under the corporate seal, all certified copies of the official records and files that may be required of him by this act [73-1-1 to 73-1-13 and 73-1-16 to 73-1-23 NMSA 1978], or by any person ordering the same and paying the reasonable cost of transcription, and any portion of the record so certified and attested shall prima facie import verity.

The board of directors are hereby vested with full power and authority to do and perform every act and thing necessary to carry out, to all intents and purposes, the provisions of this act, purposes and objects for which the district is created, including the power to enter into contracts with, and engage all necessary agents and employees, and to fix their compensation and to require of any such employees bonds for the faithful performance of their duties, as to the directors may seem proper. The members of the board of directors shall receive no salary or other compensation, but shall be allowed their actual expenses incurred in performing their official duties, and not to exceed five (\$5.00) dollars for each day's attendance at all regular or called meetings.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 17; 1941 Comp., § 77-1317; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-17.

### **73-1-20. [Program of water conservation; prevention of leaking wells.]**

After the formation of any artesian conservancy district, it shall be the duty of the board of directors from year to year to outline a plan or program of water conservation and administration, and they shall make an estimate of the cost of administration, equipment and improvements necessary to carry out such program from year to year, when the cost thereof is to be paid by tax levies. In carrying out any such plan or program the board of directors shall have authority to cooperate with the state engineer and the United States geological survey, where such cooperation is offered.

The program to be carried out and the improvements to be made and the equipment to be purchased shall be designed to accomplish the objects and purposes for which the district was created, and may include the plugging of all wells within the district found by tests to be materially leaking or wasting any waters included in the district. The directors may proceed to carry out the improvements so outlined in such manner as may be deemed for the best interest of all concerned, and may enter into any contracts or do or perform any act or thing necessary or advisable to carry out to all intents and purposes the objects and purposes for which the district was formed, and shall have the right of ingress and egress at all reasonable times to all wells within the district for the purpose of making leakage tests, and otherwise determining that such wells are properly equipped and are being used so as to conserve the waters included in the conservancy district.

All wells included in the district found to be leaking or wasting such waters, are hereby declared to be a public nuisance, and the directors of the district and those under their authority shall have the right, power and authority to go upon the lands upon which any such well is located to abate such nuisance by plugging or repairing any such well.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 18; 1941, ch. 98, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-1318; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-18.

### **73-1-21. Tax roll based on needed improvements; limitation.**

After an estimate of the cost of the improvements needed in the district is made, as provided in Section 73-1-20 NMSA 1978, the directors shall make up a tax roll, which shall include all property as shown by the decree of the court, as herein provided, and shall thereupon determine the value of the same, using the valuations as shown by the most recent tax schedules for property taxation purposes of the county or counties wherein the property is situated. The directors shall determine the tax levy to be made against the net taxable value, as that term is defined in the Property Tax Code [Chapter 7, Articles 35 to 38 NMSA 1978], of all property on the tax roll to produce the necessary revenue to make the improvements needed in the district. The tax shall not exceed, in any year, five dollars (\$5.00), or any lower maximum amount required by operation of the rate limitation provisions of Section 7-37-7.1 NMSA 1978, on each one thousand dollars (\$1,000) of net taxable value and shall be uniformly levied against all the property on such conservancy district tax roll, as hereinafter provided. The levy may be made annually, so long as necessary to finance the improvements from time to time determined by the directors to be needed in the district.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 19; 1941 Comp., § 77-1319; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-19; Laws 1986, ch. 32, § 35.

### **73-1-22. Assessment and collection; levy to be property lien; time of payment.**

The levies herein provided for shall be made by resolution of the board of directors, and the amount thereof, together with the tax roll showing the property which the assessment and levy is to be made against, shall be certified by July 15 of each year to the board of county commissioners of the county or counties in which the district is situated and included in the next annual levy for state and county purposes. The amount shall be extended on the tax schedules for property taxation purposes and be collected for the use of such district in the same manner as are taxes for county purposes, and the revenue laws of the state, for the levy and collection of taxes for county purposes, except as herein modified, shall be applicable for the levy and collection of the amount certified by the board of such district, including the penalties and enforcement thereof, and forfeiture for delinquent taxes. Taxes levied against the property in the district, as herein provided, shall be a lien upon the same from the time of such levy, subject only to levies made for state and county purposes. All collections made by the county treasurers pursuant to such levies shall be paid to the treasurer of the district on or before the tenth day of the next succeeding calendar month, and a list of the payers, the amount paid by each and the property covered thereby shall accompany such remittance. Such statement of the list of the payers shall be made upon forms furnished to the treasurer by the directors of the district.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 20; 1941 Comp., § 77-1320; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-20; Laws 1986, ch. 32, § 36.

### **73-1-23. [Loans in anticipation of taxes; repayment.]**

The directors are hereby authorized to borrow money in anticipation of the proceeds from the collection of taxes to be derived from any uniform annual levy, and in such case the proceeds of all such taxes collected shall be applied to the repayment of such loan and to no other purpose, until the same be paid in full. The directors shall cause adequate annual tax levies to be made, as herein provided, until all obligations of the district are fully satisfied.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 97, § 21; 1941 Comp., § 77-1321; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-21.

### **73-1-24. [Underground waters.]**

Wherever any artesian conservancy district has heretofore been organized or may hereafter be organized, under and pursuant to Chapter 97 of the New Mexico Session Laws of 1931 [73-1-1 to 73-1-13 and 73-1-16 to 73-1-23 NMSA 1978], or amendments thereto, such conservancy district may be given the same rights, power and authority as to all underground waters within the boundaries of such conservancy district as have been or may hereafter be conferred upon such district by said legislative act, and amendments thereto, as to artesian waters; provided, however, the boundaries of such underground waters have been reasonably ascertained and the same, or a substantial portion thereof, have been beneficially appropriated for private, public, domestic or irrigation purposes and are subject to appropriation, as provided by Chapter 131 of the New Mexico Session Laws of 1931 [72-12-1 to 72-12-10 NMSA 1978], or amendments

thereto, and provided further it is determined that said underground waters, or a substantial portion thereof, are derived from the artesian basin, or basins, included, or to be included in such district, and that the same are so closely related to such artesian waters that they can be effectively conserved by said district.

**History:** Laws 1941, ch. 98, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-1322; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-22.

### **73-1-25. [Petition to include underground waters; filing objections; hearing; amended decree.]**

Where underground waters, other than artesian waters, as provided for in Section 1 [73-1-24 NMSA 1978] hereof, are to be included in any artesian conservancy district which may hereafter be formed, the petition required to be filed and all notices required to be given and published, as provided by law in connection with the formation of such district, shall specifically state that such waters are to be included in the district, and that the district shall have the same power, right and authority with respect thereto as may be given to it by law over artesian waters.

Where any conservancy district has heretofore been formed, and the board of directors of such district shall determine by resolution that it is desirable that underground waters, other than artesian waters, shall be included in and subject to, the district, such conservancy district may file a petition in the district court of the county wherein said district was originally formed in the same proceeding, praying that the decree providing for the formation of said district be amended so as to include such waters; provided, however, the petition shall be accompanied by a certificate of the state engineer, describing with reasonable accuracy the boundaries of all underground waters, except artesian waters, within the boundaries of the conservancy district which are subject to appropriation by law, and which, in the opinion of the state engineer, should be included in the district, and certifying that to the best of his knowledge and belief such waters, or a substantial portion thereof, are derived from the artesian basin, or basins, included in such district, and that the same are so closely related to such artesian waters that they can be most effectively conserved by said district. Upon the filing of such petition, the district court having jurisdiction shall, by order, require notice to be published by the clerk of the court, at such time and places as the court may designate, giving notice to all underground water users affected by the proposed change that a hearing will be had at a time and place designated in such notice, for the purpose of determining whether or not all of the underground waters described in the certificate of the state engineer filed with the said petition should be included in the artesian conservancy district, and the decree establishing the district amended accordingly. It shall not be necessary for the clerk to name the parties interested, nor to describe the separate lots, tracts or parcels of land affected in giving such notice, but it shall be sufficient to give such descriptions of the boundaries of the underground waters proposed to be included as will enable the owner to determine whether or not his rights will be affected. The notice shall state that any person affected by the proposed inclusion of such waters shall have the right to file objections thereto, on or before the date set for hearing. If, after hearing such objections, if any, and considering any

evidence introduced in support thereof, the court finds that it is reasonably certain that a substantial portion of said waters are derived from the artesian basin, or basins, included in such district, and that the same are so closely related to such artesian waters that they can be effectively conserved by said district, the court shall enter an order amending said decree, as prayed for in said petition, and thereupon said waters shall be subject to the same rights, powers and authority as given by law to such conservancy district over artesian waters.

**History:** Laws 1941, ch. 98, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-1323; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-23.

### **73-1-26. [Right of conservancy district to protest interference; appeal to district court.]**

That any artesian conservancy district which has heretofore been organized, or may be hereafter organized, as provided by law, shall in addition to the powers granted to such districts have the right, power and authority to protest or object to any application made to the state engineer to appropriate any waters included within the boundaries of such conservancy district which may be subject to appropriation as provided by law, and to protest or object to any application to the state engineer to change the location of any well or to change the use of waters for any purpose other than that for which originally granted, where it is determined by resolution of the board of directors of such district that the granting of such proposed application would interfere with any existing water rights or program of such conservancy district for the conservation of the waters sought to be appropriated, and such district shall have the right to appeal to the district court from the decision of the state engineer within the time and manner provided by law for appeals from such decisions.

**History:** Laws 1941, ch. 98, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-1324; 1953 Comp., § 75-13-24.

### **73-1-27. Carriage loss allowance established.**

In addition to the duty of water for irrigation within any artesian conservancy district established under the provisions of Sections 73-1-1 through 73-1-26 NMSA 1978, there shall be, as a matter of right, an additional two acre-inches of water per year per acre-foot of an established water right to compensate for carriage loss between the point of appropriation and the point of beneficial use.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-13-25, enacted by Laws 1971, ch. 53, § 1.

## **ARTICLE 2**

### **Ditches or Acequias**

#### **73-2-1. [Right of construction; damages.]**

All the inhabitants of the state of New Mexico shall have the right to construct, either private or common acequias, and to take water for said acequias from wherever they can; with the distinct understanding, to pay the owner through whose land said acequias have to pass a just compensation taxed for the land used.

**History:** Laws 1874, ch. 10, § 1; C.L. 1884, § 17; C.L. 1897, § 23; Code 1915, § 5737; C.S. 1929, § 151-407; 1941 Comp., § 77-1401; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-1.

### **73-2-2. [Condemnation of lands.]**

If the owner or owners of lands, where a new ditch for an acequia is to be made, should ask an exorbitant price as a compensation therefor, which shall not be satisfactory to the owner or owners of such acequia, it shall be the duty of the probate judge of the county in which it may occur, to appoint three skillful men of well-known honesty, to make an appraisalment thereof and fix the compensation.

**History:** Laws 1874, ch. 10, § 2; C.L. 1884, § 18; C.L. 1897, § 24; Laws 1903, ch. 44, § 3; Code 1915, § 5738; C.S. 1929, § 151-408; 1941 Comp., § 77-1402; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-2.

### **73-2-3. [Taking of lands for construction.]**

In case a community of people desire to construct a ditch or acequia in any part of the state, and the constructors are the owners of all the land upon which said ditch or acequia is constructed, in such case no one shall be bound to pay for said land, as all the persons interested in the construction of said ditch or acequia are to be benefited by it.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 189, § 7; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 7; C.L. 1884, § 4; C.L. 1897, § 4; Code 1915, § 5736; C.S. 1929, § 151-406; 1941 Comp., § 77-1403; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-3.

### **73-2-4. [Preference right for irrigation; obstruction.]**

No inhabitant of this state shall have the right to construct any building of the impediment of the irrigation of lands or fields, such as mills or any other property that may obstruct the course of the water; as the irrigation of the fields should be preferable to all others.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 189, § 2; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 2; C.L. 1884, § 1; C.L. 1897, § 1; Code 1915, § 5734; C.S. 1929, § 151-404; 1941 Comp., § 77-1404; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-4.

### **73-2-5. Ditch over land of another; easement; right of servient owner; penalty.**

A. Hereafter in all cases where there has been a continuous use of a ditch for the purposes of irrigation for five years, it shall be conclusively presumed as between the parties that a grant has been made by the owners of the land, upon which such ditch is located, for the use of the same and it is unlawful to interfere with that easement or prevent access to the ditch by the owner of the dominant estate as provided by law; provided that nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the owner of a servient estate from making any alterations or changes in the location of any ditch upon his land, so long as such alteration or change of location shall not interfere with the use of or access to such ditch by the owner of the dominant estate. For the purposes of this section, the easement created pursuant to this section shall be adequate to allow for reasonable maintenance, use and improvements to the ditch.

B. In the case of a community ditch or acequia, a criminal complaint for a violation of the provisions of Subsection A of this section may be made by the district attorney or the mayordomo or commission of the ditch or acequia to the magistrate court in the county where the violation occurred. A person convicted of violating the provisions of Subsection A of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction, the defendant shall be fined not less than three hundred dollars (\$300) nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or sentenced up to ninety days imprisonment in the county jail, or both.

C. In the case of a community ditch or acequia, in addition to criminal prosecution, the district attorney or the mayordomo or commission of the ditch or acequia may file a civil complaint seeking a civil penalty not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for knowingly, intentionally or willfully violating the provisions of Subsection A of this section.

D. The remedies provided for in this section shall not be construed as limiting the right of the party bringing the civil or criminal complaint from seeking damages. In addition to the remedies provided in this section, the district attorney, mayordomo or commission of the ditch or acequia or owner of the dominant estate may apply to the district court of the county where the violation occurred for an injunction restraining any person from violating or continuing to violate the provisions of Subsection A of this section.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 65, § 1; 1941, ch. 155, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-1405; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-5; 2005, ch. 186, § 1.

## **73-2-6. [Ancient ditches protected.]**

The course of ditches or acequias established prior to July 20, 1851, shall not be disturbed.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 189, § 8; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 8; C.L. 1884, § 5; C.L. 1897, § 5; Code 1915, § 5732; C.S. 1929, § 151-402; 1941 Comp., § 77-1406; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-6.

### **73-2-7. [Ownership; right to water.]**

All acequias, public or private, when completed, shall be the property of the persons who may have completed such acequias or ditches, and no person or persons who may desire to use the waters of such acequias or ditches shall be allowed so to do without the consent of a majority of the owners of such acequias or ditches, and upon payment of a share proportionate to the primary cost of such acequia or ditch to the amount of the land proposed to be irrigated, or the quantity of water proposed to be used: provided, that the provisions of this section shall not apply to any acequias or ditches, public or private, that may pass from the limits of any one county to within the lines of any other county.

**History:** Laws 1882, ch. 30, § 1; C.L. 1884, § 15; C.L. 1897, § 21; Code 1915, § 5733; C.S. 1929, § 151-403; 1941 Comp., § 77-1407; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-7.

### **73-2-8. [Management of ditches crossing county line.]**

Where any acequia or ditch, public or private, passes from within the limits of any one county, to within the lines of any other county, such acequias or ditches within the proper precincts of their respective counties shall be under the exclusive control and management of the officers of such precincts and counties.

**History:** Laws 1882, ch. 30, § 2; C.L. 1884, § 16; C.L. 1897, § 22; Code 1915, § 5752; C.S. 1929, § 151-422; 1941 Comp., § 77-1408; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-8.

### **73-2-9. [Acequias declared public.]**

All rivers and streams of water in this state, known prior to January 7, 1852, as public ditches or acequias, are established and declared to be public ditches or acequias.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 277, § 1; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 9; C.L. 1884, § 6; C.L. 1897, § 6; Code 1915, § 5731; C.S. 1929, § 151-401; 1941 Comp., § 77-1409; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-9.

### **73-2-10. [Ownership of plants on banks.]**

All plants of any description growing on the banks of said ditches, or acequias, shall belong to the owners of the land through which said ditches or acequias run.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 277, § 16; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 24; C.L. 1884, § 11; C.L. 1897, § 17; Code 1915, § 5745; C.S. 1929, § 151-415; 1941 Comp., § 77-1410; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-10.



### **73-2-11. [Community ditches made corporations; ditches taking water from common source.]**

All community ditches or acequias shall for the purposes of this article be considered as corporations or bodies corporate, with power to sue or to be sued as such. And every one of said community ditches beginning at the dam or entrance of the water, in continued course to the end of the same, shall be considered as one ditch or acequia only, to be superintended by three commissioners and one mayordomo as now provided by law, except that where two community ditches or more take water from a common ditch or head, they shall be and remain separate and under separate management.

**History:** Laws 1895, ch. 1, § 1; C.L. 1897, § 8; Laws 1903, ch. 98, § 1; Code 1915, § 5744; C.S. 1929, § 151-414; 1941 Comp., § 77-1411; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-11.

### **73-2-12. Officers, election, bonds and vacancies in certain counties.**

The officers of such community ditches or acequias shall consist of three commissioners and one mayordomo or superintendent, each of whom shall be the owner of an interest in the ditch or the water therein. The officers shall be elected biennially on the first Monday of December of the odd numbered years and shall assume the duties of their office not later than the first Monday of the following January. On or before the first Monday of January, the commissioners shall organize by election of one of their number as chairman, another as secretary and another as treasurer. The treasurer shall be required to give a bond to the state in a sum to be fixed by the commissioners. The mayordomo shall also be required to give a bond to the state in a sum to be fixed by the commissioners. The condition of the bonds [is] to be for the accounting of all money coming into their hands by virtue of their offices and for the faithful performance of their respective duties. In the event of a vacancy in the office of mayordomo, the commissioners shall have power to appoint a mayordomo or superintendent to hold office until his successor is elected and qualified.

**History:** Laws 1895, ch. 1, § 2; C.L. 1897, § 9; Code 1915, § 5746; C.S. 1929, § 151-416; 1941 Comp., § 77-1412; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-12; Laws 1987, ch. 64, § 1.

### **73-2-13. [Vacancies in office of commissioner.]**

In case a vacancy shall occur among the commissioners of any community ditch or acequia, by death, resignation or otherwise, the remaining commissioners or commissioner shall fill such vacancy by appointment, and those appointed shall hold their offices until their successors are regularly elected and qualified.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 116, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 151-502; 1941 Comp., § 77-1413; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-13.

### **73-2-14. Ditch elections; votes.**

The election for acequia or community ditch officers under this article shall be held by the outgoing commissioners under rules and regulations to be prescribed by them. Only those having water rights in the acequia or ditch and who are not delinquent in the payment of their assessments, and fail to [sic] proffer such delinquent assessment at the time they offer to vote, shall be allowed to vote; but votes may be cast by written proxy and shall be in proportion to the interest of the voter in the ditch or water, or in proportion to the number or amount of his water rights.

**History:** Laws 1895, ch. 1, § 3; C.L. 1897, § 10; Code 1915, § 5753; Laws 1921, ch. 129, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 151-423; 1941 Comp., § 77-1414; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-14.

### **73-2-15. [Failure to hold election; calling of special election.]**

In case no election shall be held of commissioners of any community ditch or acequia on the first Monday of December as provided by law, the commissioners holding office during the preceding year shall call and hold an election as soon as practicable thereafter, and give at least five days notice thereof by posting not less than six notices on the line of said ditch or acequia, stating the place and time of the election; said election to be conducted in the manner provided for the regular annual elections, and under existing provisions of law relative to such elections and the votes thereat. In case the commissioners shall refuse or neglect to call and hold said elections within a reasonable time, any three or more of those entitled to vote thereat may call such election and hold the same in the manner and under the provisions aforesaid, and the three persons receiving the highest number of votes at such election shall be the commissioners of the said ditch or acequia until their successors are regularly elected and qualified.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 116, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 151-503; 1941 Comp., § 77-1415; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-15.

### **73-2-16. [Disqualifications.]**

It shall be prohibited to elect or appoint as mayordomo of acequias or public road supervisor all persons of ill-health, of a notable malady, or who are demented or of unsound mind or who are lame either in one leg or both or one arm or both, and furthermore all persons who are exempted by law from paying road taxes.

**History:** Laws 1891, ch. 90, § 1; C.L. 1897, § 50; Code 1915, § 5747; C.S. 1929, § 151-417; 1941 Comp., § 77-1416; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-16.

### **73-2-17. [Disqualifications.]**

All appointments made in conflict with the preceding section [73-2-16 NMSA 1978] are hereby declared void and of no effect.

**History:** Laws 1891, ch. 90, § 2; C.L. 1897, § 51; Code 1915, § 5748; C.S. 1929, § 151-418; 1941 Comp., § 77-1417; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-17.

### **73-2-18. [Pay of mayordomo.]**

The pay and other perquisites of the mayordomos shall be determined by a majority of the owners of the land irrigated by said ditch or acequia.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 277, § 4; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 12; C.L. 1884, § 29; C.L. 1897, § 31; Code 1915, § 5749; C.S. 1929, § 151-419; 1941 Comp., § 77-1418; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-18.

### **73-2-19. [Mayordomo; not to lease lands.]**

It shall be unlawful for any mayordomo or mayordomos of acequias, to take on shares, care for, or rent or lease any lands, lots or alfalfa fields under irrigation within the ditches for which they are mayordomos, during the time that they are said mayordomos, besides those lands actually belonging to them as their own property or that of their wives.

**History:** Laws 1899, ch. 73, § 1; Code 1915, § 5750; C.S. 1929, § 151-420; 1941 Comp., § 77-1419; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-19.

### **73-2-20. [Mayordomo not to lease lands; penalty.]**

Any violation of the preceding section [73-2-19 NMSA 1978] shall be considered a misdemeanor, and be punishable upon conviction by imprisonment in the county jail for not less than thirty days nor more than six months, or by a fine of not less than \$25.00 nor more than \$100 or both, at the discretion of the court.

**History:** Laws 1899, ch. 73, § 2; Code 1915, § 5751; C.S. 1929, § 151-421; 1941 Comp., § 77-1420; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-20.

### **73-2-21. Commissioners' powers and duties; mayordomo's duties.**

A. The commissioners shall:

- (1) assess fatigue work or tasks of all parties owning water rights in such community ditches or acequias;
- (2) have power to contract and be contracted with;

(3) make all necessary assessments to provide funds for the payment of the salary of the mayordomo and other legitimate expenses incident to the proper conduct and maintenance of the acequias under their charge;

(4) make contracts for obtaining water for irrigation purposes in connection with their ditches, such contracts to be ratified by a vote of a majority of the owners of water rights in the ditches;

(5) have general charge and control of all affairs pertaining to the same, together with the power to receive money in lieu of such fatigue or task work at a price to be fixed by them; and

(6) immediately upon taking office, provide bylaws, rules and regulations not in conflict with the laws of the state for the government of the ditch or acequia, a printed copy of which shall be furnished to each owner of a water right in such ditch.

B. The mayordomo or superintendent shall, under the direction of the commissioners, be the executive officer of the ditch and shall:

(1) have the superintendence of all work thereon, the distribution of the waters thereof and the collection of fines, if any, and of amounts to be paid in lieu of fatigue or task work;

(2) perform such other duties in connection with the ditch as may be prescribed by the rules and regulations of the same or as may be directed by the commissioners; and

(3) make full written reports of all money received, expended and how expended, and of all activities performed as such officer to the commissioners of the ditch, semiannually, on the first Monday in June and the last Monday in September; provided, further, that the mayordomo shall make such further reports as may be required by the ditch commissioners.

C. The treasurer of the ditch commissioners shall make reports to the ditch commissioners of the money received, expended and how expended, and kept in the custody of the treasurer, and of all activities performed as such officer as are herein required of the mayordomo.

D. The commissioners shall receive and pass upon the reports of the mayordomo and the treasurer provided for in this section before their term of office expires. If the reports are found to be true and correct, they shall approve them; otherwise they shall reject them, respectively. All proceedings of the commissioners relating to all subjects whatsoever shall be reduced to writing in a book or books kept for that purpose, and all books and papers so kept by the commissioners and all reports made, filed or kept as herein required shall always be and remain public property, and shall be subject to the inspection of all persons therein concerned.

E. Pursuant to the rules or bylaws duly adopted by its members, an acequia or community ditch may require that a change in point of diversion or place or purpose of use of a water right served by the acequia or community ditch, or a change in a water right so that it is moved into and then served by the acequia or community ditch, shall be subject to approval by the commissioners of the acequia or community ditch. The change may be denied only if the commissioners determine that it would be detrimental to the acequia or community ditch or its members. The commissioners shall render a written decision explaining the reasons for the decision. If the person proposing the change or a member of the acequia or community ditch is aggrieved by the decision of the commissioners, he may appeal the decision in the district court of the county in which the acequia or community ditch is located within thirty days of the date of the decision. The court may set aside, reverse or remand the decision if it determines that the commissioners acted fraudulently, arbitrarily or capriciously, or that they did not act in accordance with law.

**History:** Laws 1895, ch. 1, § 4; 1897, ch. 44, § 1; C.L. 1897, § 11; Laws 1903, ch. 44, § 1; Code 1915, § 5754; C.S. 1929, § 151-424; 1941 Comp., § 77-1421; Laws 1945, ch. 47, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-21; Laws 1977, ch. 247, § 198; 1981, ch. 337, § 1; 2003, ch. 82, § 2; 2003, ch. 135, § 2.

### **73-2-22. [Acequia and community ditch associations; borrowing money; contracting indebtedness; security for payment.]**

All acequia and community ditch associations are authorized to borrow money and otherwise contract indebtedness for the purposes of the district and, without limitation of the generality of the foregoing, to borrow money and accept grants from the United States, or from any corporation or agency created or designated by the United States, and, in connection with any such loan or grant, to enter into agreements as the United States or such corporation or agency may require, and to issue its notes or obligations therefor, and to secure the payment thereof by mortgage, pledge or deed of trust covering any of its property, assets, rights, privileges, licenses, rights-of-way, easements, revenues, income and assessments.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-14-21.1, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 183, § 1.

#### **73-2-22.1. Acequia and community ditch associations; additional powers; water rights acquisition; nonforfeiture.**

A. Any acequia or community ditch association has the power to acquire and hold property and water rights and transfer and use the property and water rights so acquired pursuant to law.

B. The rights of an acequia or community ditch association to the waters of the acequia or association or their use or the lands and property owned by the acequia or association shall not be lost by the acequia or community ditch association by

prescription or adverse possession or for nonuse of waters except as provided in Section 72-5-28 NMSA 1978.

**History:** 1978 Comp., § 73-2-22.1, enacted by Laws 1987, ch. 352, § 1.

### **73-2-23. [Reimbursement of commissioner's expenses.]**

The commissioner of each acequia shall be entitled to actual expenses incurred while in the performance of their [his] duties. Provided that the maximum rates which may be allowed for travel by privately owned conveyances shall be eight (8) cents per mile and provided further that if more than one commissioner shall travel in the same privately owned conveyances such mileage shall be charged but once.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-1421a, enacted by Laws 1945, ch. 46, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-22.

### **73-2-24. [Maximum charge in lieu of fatigue work; excepted counties.]**

That hereafter in this state the commissioners of community ditches when receiving money in lieu of fatigue work or tasks, shall not fix the price of such work or task at a greater rate than one dollar and fifty cents (\$1.50) per day, for one person's labor, nor at a greater rate than three dollars (\$3.00) per wagon, scraper or plow with team of horses and man per day, when that sort of work is called for. This act [this section] shall not apply to the counties of San Miguel, Torrance, Lincoln, Otero, Taos, Rio Arriba and Quay.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 111, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 151-464; 1941 Comp., § 77-1422; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-23.

### **73-2-25. Persons delinquent not to use water; penalty.**

No person who has, after due notice, failed or refused to do his work, or pay the amount assessed against him in lieu of the work upon the acequia or ditch, shall be allowed to take or use any water from the same or any contra acequia or lateral thereof, while default on the payment of failure to do work continues. Any person who continues to take or use any water after having been given notice of failure or refusal to do his work, or pay the amount assessed against him in lieu of the work shall pay a civil penalty for the benefit of the ditch or acequia of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor more than two hundred dollars (\$200). The penalty may be recovered in an action by the ditch officials before the magistrate court in the county where the ditch is located.

**History:** Laws 1895, ch. 1, § 5; C.L. 1897, § 12; Code 1915, § 5755; C.S. 1929, § 151-425; 1941 Comp., § 77-1423; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-24; Laws 1977, ch. 184, § 1.

## **73-2-26. Actions for collection of assessments.**

A. Whenever any person, after due notice, has failed to do work or has failed to pay any amount assessed against the person on any acequia or ditch, the mayordomo or superintendent of the acequia or ditch may bring a civil action for collection of the amount assessed. The magistrate courts and the district courts have concurrent jurisdiction in these actions and the actions may be brought in either forum at the election of the ditch officials. If the ditch officials engage the services of an attorney to assist in the collection of the assessments, the court shall charge the offending party with a reasonable amount for attorney fees incurred in the collection, if the ditch officials prevail in the action.

B. Any person who continues to take or use water from the acequia or ditch without paying the assessments and attorney fees as set by a judgment under this section shall pay a civil penalty for the benefit of the ditch or acequia of not more than two hundred dollars (\$200). The penalty may be recovered in an action by the ditch officials before the court in the county where the acequia or ditch is located.

C. A money judgment rendered in a magistrate court or district court under this section shall be a lien on the judgment debtor's property to which the water rights that incurred the fees or assessments are appurtenant. The lien shall be effective from the date of filing a certified copy of the judgment, if obtained from a magistrate court, or a transcript of the judgment, if obtained from a district court, in the office of the county clerk of the county in which the property is located; provided that a judgment shall not be filed with the county clerk pursuant to this subsection before the last day to appeal the judgment has expired and until all appeals taken are exhausted. The acequia or community ditch officials shall provide written notice to the property owner that a lien has been placed on the property. When the judgment has been fully satisfied, the acequia or community ditch officials shall file a release of lien in the office of the county clerk of the county in which the property is located within fifteen days. The cost of filing the release of lien shall be assessed against the judgment debtor and shall be collected before the release of lien is required to be filed.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-14-24.1, enacted by Laws 1963, ch. 29, § 1; 1977, ch. 184, § 2; 2019, ch. 108, § 1.

## **73-2-27. [Community ditches defined.]**

The provisions of these sections shall apply only to such ditches as have been heretofore and are now known and regarded as community ditches, under the laws of this state; and under the provisions of said sections, shall be construed to mean such ditches as are not private, and such as are not incorporated under the laws of this state or of some other state or territory, and are held and owned by more than two owners as tenants in common, or joint tenants.

**History:** Laws 1895, ch. 1, § 8; C.L. 1897, § 14; Code 1915, § 5756; C.S. 1929, § 151-426; 1941 Comp., § 77-1424; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-25.

### **73-2-28. Acequia and community ditch associations.**

Acequia and community ditch associations are political subdivisions of this state. As political subdivisions of the state, acequia and community ditch associations are authorized to receive loans from the interstate stream commission from the New Mexico irrigation works construction fund.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-14-25.1, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 145, § 1; 2001, ch. 221, § 2.

#### **73-2-28.1. Acequias and community ditch associations; insurance coverage.**

Officers, volunteers and employees of acequias and community ditch associations are public employees for the purposes of the Tort Claims Act [41-4-1 to 41-4-27 NMSA 1978] and upon request by the acequia or community ditch association shall be provided all insurance and self-insurance coverage provided by the risk management division of the general services department.

**History:** Laws 2006, ch. 54, § 2 and Laws 2006, ch. 55, § 2.

#### **73-2-29. [Improper conduct of mayordomo or commissioner; removal from office; temporary appointment of successor.]**

If any mayordomo or commissioner of any such ditch or acequia shall neglect or refuse to perform the duties required of him, fail to or [sic] conduct himself with propriety or justice in his office or take any bribe, in money, property, or otherwise as an inducement to act improperly, or neglect the duties of his office or be guilty of misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance he shall be removed from office in an action brought in the district court of the county where the public ditch or acequia or larger portion thereof is located. Such action may be brought by any water user of such public ditch or acequia provided that no cost or expenses for such action shall be assessed to the water user of such district or acequia.

If a commissioner or mayordomo is removed as above provided the district judge removing him shall appoint a commissioner or mayordomo to serve until the next election.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-1425a, enacted by Laws 1945, ch. 46, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-26.

#### **73-2-30. [Duty to furnish laborers.]**



It shall be the duty of the proprietors to furnish, each one, the number of laborers required by the mayordomo, at the time and place he may designate, for the purposes mentioned in the foregoing section and for the time he may deem necessary.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 277, § 6; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 14; C.L. 1884, § 37; C.L. 1897, § 34; Code 1915, § 5760; C.S. 1929, § 151-430; 1941 Comp., § 77-1426; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-27.

### **73-2-31. Failure to furnish laborers.**

If any proprietor of any land irrigated by any such ditch shall neglect or refuse to furnish the number of laborers required by the mayordomo, as prescribed in Section 73-2-30 NMSA 1978, after having been legally notified by the mayordomo, he shall pay a civil penalty for each offense in a sum not exceeding twenty dollars (\$20.00) for the benefit of the ditch, which shall be recovered by the mayordomo before any magistrate in the county, and in such cases the mayordomo may be a competent witness to prove the offense, or any fact that may serve to constitute the same. The amounts collected under this section shall be considered as an additional penalty and are not construed to amend or limit the provisions of Section 73-2-25 or 73-2-26 NMSA 1978.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 277, § 9; C.S. 1865, ch. 1, § 17; C.L. 1884, § 38; C.L. 1897, § 35; Code 1915, § 5761; C.S. 1929, § 151-431; 1941 Comp., § 77-1427; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-28; Laws 1977, ch. 184, § 3.

### **73-2-32. [Disposition of fines.]**

All fines and forfeitures recovered for the use and benefit of any public ditch or acequia, shall be applied by the overseer [mayordomo or superintendent] to the improvements, excavation and bridges for the same, wherever it may be crossed by any public road where bridges may be necessary.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 277, § 11; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 19; C.L. 1884, § 8; C.L. 1897, § 15; Code 1915, § 5757; C.S. 1929, § 151-427; 1941 Comp., § 77-1428; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-29.

### **73-2-33. [Duty to work.]**

All owners of tillable lands shall labor on public ditches or acequias, whether they cultivate the land or not.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 189, § 4; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 4; C.L. 1884, § 36; C.L. 1897, § 33; Code 1915, § 5758; C.S. 1929, § 151-428; 1941 Comp., § 77-1429; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-30.

### **73-2-34. Common labor; failure to work.**

All persons interested in a common ditch or acequia, be they owners or lessees, shall labor thereon in proportion to their land. It is their duty when called upon by the mayordomo to assist him in stopping breaks in, or removing obstructions from, any such common ditch or acequia, regardless of whether or not they have performed their annual labor thereupon, and failure to respond to such call is a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof the defendant shall be fined in a sum not less than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) nor more than fifty dollars (\$50.00), and shall be denied the use of waters of the ditch or acequia until the fine and costs are paid.

**History:** Laws 1851-1852, p. 189, § 5; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 5; C.L. 1884, § 35; C.L. 1897, § 32; Laws 1903, ch. 44, § 4; Code 1915, § 5759; C.S. 1929, § 151-429; 1941 Comp., § 77-1430; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-31; Laws 1977, ch. 184, § 4.

### **73-2-35. [Obligation to work continues until completion.]**

Every person or persons, being tillers of irrigated lands, who shall have commenced the work on any public acequia in common labor, are and shall be obligated to continue on that work until the completion of the clearing of said acequia.

**History:** Laws 1860-1861, p. 66, § 1; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 27; C.L. 1884, § 43; C.L. 1897, § 40; Code 1915, § 5763; C.S. 1929, § 151-433; 1941 Comp., § 77-1431; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-32.

### **73-2-36. [Duty to furnish laborers; mayordomos to superintend work.]**

If any number of laborers, or any person thereof, having their fields above on such acequias, and having reached them, shall pretend from any cause or causes, reason or pretext, to abandon their co-laborers, he or they shall not be permitted to leave said work of the laborers in common until the completion of the cleansing of the said acequia so commenced to be worked: provided, that touching the repairs and excavations to be made to said acequias, the proportion of the people, or the number of laborers for such purpose shall be furnished by the owners, and it shall be the duty of the mayordomos to superintend [superintend] such work, and as provided in section 5754 [73-2-21 NMSA 1978]: provided, further, that if in any acequias already constructed there shall be included any dikes or dams which may have been destroyed, and the parties interested therein shall have entered into any agreement or contract with the owners to work said acequia, then they shall so remain and fulfill their engagements.

**History:** Laws 1860-1861, p. 66, § 2; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 28; C.L. 1884, § 45; C.L. 1897, § 42; Code 1915, § 5765; C.S. 1929, § 151-435; 1941 Comp., § 77-1432; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-33.

### **73-2-37. [Penalty for abandoning work.]**

If any owners of lands, or lessees thereof, shall attempt to abandon their co-laborers without complying with sections 5763 to 5765 [73-2-35 to 73-2-37 NMSA 1978], they shall pay for each of such offenses a fine of not less than five dollars [(\$5.00)] nor exceeding ten dollars [(\$10.00)].

**History:** Laws 1860-1861, p. 66, § 4; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 30; C.L. 1884, § 44; C.L. 1897, § 41; Code 1915, § 5764; C.S. 1929, § 151-434; 1941 Comp., § 77-1433; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-34.

### **73-2-38. [Labor to be in proportion to land ownership.]**

As the excavations of such acequias, and in the first cleansing of some of them, the work sometimes continues for thirty days, more or less, the different mayordomos shall take into consideration the small amount of land tilled by some, and not compel these to furnish an equal amount of labor in the cleansing.

**History:** Laws 1860-1861, p. 66, § 3; C.L. 1865, ch. 1, § 29; C.L. 1884, § 46; C.L. 1897, § 43; Code 1915, § 5766; C.S. 1929, § 151-436; 1941 Comp., § 77-1434; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-35.

### **73-2-39. [Duty to furnish laborers; duty of absent landowner.]**

Every owner or tenant of irrigable lands, irrigated by any of such acequias in this state, shall be compelled to hold at all times during the operations of the acequias to which they belong, the number of laborers to them assigned according to the provisions of the preceding section [73-2-38 NMSA 1978], at the disposal and order of the respective mayordomo or his assistant. And it shall not be legal for any owner or tenant of irrigable lands, irrigated by any of such acequias, to absent himself for a time exceeding three days without informing the chief mayordomo of the respective acequia about the persons remaining in his stead to comply with his or their duty regarding said acequia, and he shall even present them, so that in his presence they may assume the responsibilities during the time of absence of such person or persons that are to be absent. And all the responsibilities of such absentees regarding said acequias shall fall upon the substitutes left, and no other persons but those assuming the responsibility of the person by whom they are presented shall be admitted as substitutes. And if any of such owners or tenants of irrigable lands, irrigated under any of such acequias in this state, should absent himself from the precinct during the time the acequias are in operation, without complying with the duty upon him imposed by this and the succeeding section [73-2-40 NMSA 1978], besides suffering the penalty fixed by the mayordomo, he shall be responsible to the public where he belongs for a just and common estimate, per diem, of the time he was absent, and the number of laborers that may have been assigned to him. Nor shall any proprietor, on account of having rented his lands, reserving a part for himself, be exempt from working on the acequia at any time of said work.

**History:** Laws 1880, ch. 30, § 8; C.L. 1884, § 47; C.L. 1897, § 44; Code 1915, § 5767; C.S. 1929, § 151-437; 1941 Comp., § 77-1435; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-36.

### **73-2-40. [Failure to furnish laborers; penalty.]**

The penalties on those who shall fail to supply the amount of work due by them, according to the provisions of this and the preceding section [73-2-39 NMSA 1978], or the number of laborers on them apportioned or for any violation of existing laws on this subject; and those penalties that are applicable under existing laws to mayordomos, shall be the same that shall be applied in these cases, and they shall be executed and fines shall be disbursed in the same manner: provided, that when any chief mayordomo shall have, in person, given notice to any person who is liable and owes work to the acequia of which he is mayordomo, and such person fails, then and in such case the mayordomo shall impose on the persons so failing the penalty or fine which the law authorizes. And if it is not paid he shall sue them before the justice of the peace [magistrate court] for the same; and there it shall be finally decided and executed, if the defendant does not offer credible witnesses to disprove and combat the charge. In which case an examination of the whole subject shall be made by said justice of the peace [magistrate court], and he shall decide accordingly, or shall grant a change of venue to the nearest precinct, should the defendant so desire.

**History:** Laws 1880, ch. 30, § 4; C.L. 1884, § 48; C.L. 1897, § 45; Code 1915, § 5768; C.S. 1929, § 151-438; 1941 Comp., § 77-1436; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-37.

### **73-2-41. Indians; rights and duties.**

The different Indians residing within the state shall be subject to render the same services as non-Indians in working the acequias, within the limits of their respective reservations in which they may have a common interest with the non-Indians who live outside their respective reservations, and they shall enjoy at the same time the same benefit and rights of commercial traffic; provided that the Indians shall have no right to participate in the nominations and election of acequia mayordomos or superintendents or acequia or water commissioners in any ditch, whether within or without their reservations, except in acequias constructed entirely by themselves, unless they have paid their proportionate share of the whole cost of the construction of such acequia and unless the lands sought to be voted by the Indians have been duly returned for taxation in accordance with law and state and county taxes paid thereon. In all cases in which non-Indians living outside the reservation have acquired water rights by purchase of land from the Indians, the distribution of the water between the Indians and the non-Indians shall be agreed upon, based upon the customs heretofore practiced and recognized between the Indians and the non-Indians, by and between the governor of the Indian community or pueblo and the commissioners of such acequias in which the non-Indians may have acquired any such rights and, the governors of such Indians and the acequia commissioners shall also regulate the amount and manner of work to be done by the Indians and non-Indians in all such acequias in which all have water rights in accordance with such customs.

**History:** Laws 1860-1861, p. 24, § 2; C.L. 1865, ch. 66, § 3 [2]; C.L. 1884, § 1305; C.L. 1897, § 1876; Laws 1901, ch. 29, § 1; 1905, ch. 36, § 1; Code 1915, § 5769; C.S. 1929, § 151-439; 1941 Comp., § 77-1437; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-38; Laws 1997, ch. 96, § 1.

### **73-2-42. Blind persons; free irrigation.**

The commissioners of any community ditch in New Mexico, shall have power according to their discretion if they deem it proper, to allow a blind person or his surviving spouse to irrigate free of charge any portion of land not to exceed three acres. Provided, that the parties to whom the privilege may be granted as herein stated, shall have an interest and water right in the ditch, and shall be subject to the use of the water as per the orders of the mayordomo or superintendent of the ditch.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 36, § 1; Code 1915, § 5770; C.S. 1929, § 151-440; 1941 Comp., § 77-1438; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-39; Laws 1973, ch. 44, § 1.

### **73-2-43. [Bridges across roads.]**

Mayordomos of public and community ditches, shall construct to the cost of the owners of said ditch, good and substantial bridges, made of lumber across all ditches that shall be under their charge, as said mayordomos in all the crossings of public road or roads.

**History:** Laws 1897, ch. 59, § 1; C.L. 1897, § 46; Code 1915, § 5772; C.S. 1929, § 151-442; 1941 Comp., § 77-1439; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-40.

### **73-2-44. [Payment for bridges.]**

For the purpose of constructing such bridges, the respective mayordomos of acequias shall collect from the owners of said ditches, the amount required for the construction of the same, after the same have been constructed, which amount so taxed against the owners of said ditches shall be in proportion of their interests on the same: provided, that neither the county nor the owners of other acequias shall pay anything for the construction of said bridges, but, the owners of each ditch respectively, shall suffer the necessary expense in the construction of said bridges that might be necessary to construct bridges over said ditches.

**History:** Laws 1897, ch. 59, § 2; C.L. 1897, § 47; Code 1915, § 5773; C.S. 1929, § 151-443; 1941 Comp., § 77-1440; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-41.

### **73-2-45. [Persons delinquent for bridges not to use waters.]**

Every person failing or refusing to pay his share for such purpose after he has been notified by the mayordomo, shall forfeit his right to use the water of such ditch, or shall

be deprived of the use of such water until he pays his share as provided in Section 5773 [73-2-44 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 1897, ch. 59, § 3; C.L. 1897, § 48; Code 1915, § 5774; C.S. 1929, § 151-444; 1941 Comp., § 77-1441; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-42.

### **73-2-46. [Mayordomo failure to perform duties; penalty.]**

Any mayordomo who through negligence or any other cause whatsoever, except sickness, shall fail to comply, with the duties imposed upon him, by the three preceding sections [73-2-43 through 73-2-45], upon conviction before the justice of the peace [magistrate court] of the precinct, shall be fined in a sum not less than twenty-five [(\$25.00)] nor more than fifty dollars [(\$50.00)].

**History:** Laws 1897, ch. 59, § 4; C.L. 1897, § 49; Code 1915, § 5775; C.S. 1929, § 151-445; 1941 Comp., § 77-1442; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-43.

### **73-2-47. [Several ditches from one stream; joint meeting of commissioners.]**

It shall be the duty of all the ditch commissioners of the state of New Mexico, where two or more ditches are constructed from and supply waters from the same source or river and within the limits of a precinct, to have a meeting on the first Monday of April of each year for the purpose of making a true, just and equitable apportionment and distribution of the water for their respective ditches, and it shall be the duty of the superintendents of said ditches respectively to apportion and distribute the water in said ditches among the persons entitled thereto to the use of the same, in accordance with the orders of said ditch commissioners and not otherwise.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 15, § 1; Code 1915, § 5776; C.S. 1929, § 151-446; 1941 Comp., § 77-1443; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-44.

### **73-2-48. [Organization; rules and regulations.]**

In the meeting of said ditch commissioners, a majority of the persons elected as such shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, to carry out the purposes of the preceding section [73-2-47 NMSA 1978]. They shall elect a chairman and secretary from among their number. The chairman and secretary thus elected shall hold their positions during their term of office as ditch commissioners, and it shall be the duty of the secretary to keep in a proper book all of the proceedings of the meeting and to furnish the respective superintendents with a certified copy of the rules and regulations adopted at said meeting for the apportionment and distribution of the water free of cost.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 15, § 2; Code 1915, § 5777; C.S. 1929, § 151-447; 1941 Comp., § 77-1444; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-45.

### **73-2-49. [Distribution of water.]**

The said apportionment and distribution of the water shall be made in accordance with the rights of each ditch, and in proportion to the lands irrigated by each ditch.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 15, § 3; Code 1915, § 5778; C.S. 1929, § 151-448; 1941 Comp., § 77-1445; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-46.

### **73-2-50. [Neglect of duty; penalty.]**

If any superintendent or water commissioner, neglects or refuses to discharge the duties required of him by the three preceding sections [73-2-47 to 73-2-49 NMSA 1978], he shall be fined for each offense in a sum not to exceed ten dollars (\$10.00) recoverable before any justice of the peace [magistrate court] in the county; and the moneys thus recovered from said fines, shall be paid to the county treasurer, to be applied to the school fund of the district where said offense is committed.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 15, § 4; Code 1915, § 5779; C.S. 1929, § 151-449; 1941 Comp., § 77-1446; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-47.

### **73-2-51. [Not applicable on Rio Grande.]**

Nothing in the four preceding sections [73-2-47 to 73-2-50 NMSA 1978] shall be construed as applying to the community or other ditches constructed from and conveying waters from the Rio Grande.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 15, § 5; Code 1915, § 5780; C.S. 1929, § 151-450; 1941 Comp., § 77-1447; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-48.

### **73-2-52. [Spillways; place; work on excess water.]**

Whenever 10 [ten] or more of the landowners of any main ditch or lateral, deem it necessary to open a drainage, tajo or outlet, near the main dam or away from said dam of any public ditch or lateral, with the object of drawing off the excess of water, or to regulate the water of said ditches, with the object of protecting the dams from any floods, or the damage of lands from excess waters, the water commissioners of said ditch or lateral are authorized to determine the place where such drainage, tajo or outlet shall be opened, under the supervision of the mayordomo by the owners of the irrigable land of such ditch and the work shall be taxed in proportion of the irrigable property of each owner, and any person or persons belonging to said ditch or lateral, who shall fail or refuse to perform work, or pay the amount assessed against him in lieu of said work shall not be allowed to take or use any water from the same or any contra acequia or lateral thereof, whilst default in such payment or failure to do such work, continues.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 85, § 1; Code 1915, § 5781; Laws 1921, ch. 148, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 151-451; 1941 Comp., § 77-1448; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-49.

**73-2-53. [Degaguas; irrigation from; irrigation with excess water; subject to regular payment; use without consent of mayordomo; penalty.]**

The owners of irrigable land, situate in the margin of any drainage or discharges of water from any public ditch, being a member or members of said ditch, shall have to pay for the irrigation of said lands in the same manner as all other lands belonging to said ditches, whether they irrigate them for the uses of harvest, or for hay land, alfalfa or other pasture, and shall not be excused on the pretext that they only use the excess of water of said ditch. And if such owners of land use the water without the consent of the mayordomo, they shall be fined in a sum not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) nor more than twenty dollars (\$20.00).

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 85, § 2; Code 1915, § 5782; C.S. 1929, § 151-452; 1941 Comp., § 77-1449; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-50.

**73-2-54. [Joint spillways or degaguas; use of water without consent; penalty.]**

When two or more public ditches drain their excess of waters at the same drainage, the same shall be considered as joint owners of said drainage and no person or persons that may own lands on either side of said drainage shall have the right to use the water of said drainage without the consent of the mayordomos of said joint owners, and said owners of land shall not be permitted to put any impediment, encumbrances, or sidegates or dams upon said drainage and if at any time it shall be discovered that they use the water with the object of irrigating land whether it may be for harvest, or hay land to cut hay or to purchase stock of any kind, they shall be responsible for the damages that the excess of water may cause in time of flood; furthermore if they use the water without the consent of the mayordomos of said joint owners' drainage, they shall be fined in a sum not less than five dollars (\$5.00) nor more than ten dollars (\$10.00) for each and every offense.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 85, § 3; Code 1915, § 5783; C.S. 1929, § 151-453; 1941 Comp., § 77-1450; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-51.

**73-2-55. [Joint spillways or degaguas; use of water; authority of majority of mayordomos.]**

The majority of the mayordomos of said ditches of the joint drainage, shall be authorized to make arrangements with said owners of land regarding the use of said excess waters, and the result of said arrangements shall be for the benefit of all ditches that may discharge the water upon such drainage.



**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 85, § 4; Code 1915, § 5784; C.S. 1929, § 151-454; 1941 Comp., § 77-1451; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-52.

### **73-2-55.1. Water banking; acequias and community ditches.**

An acequia or community ditch may establish a water bank for the purpose of temporarily reallocating water without change of purpose of use or point of diversion to augment the water supplies available for the places of use served by the acequia or community ditch. The acequia or community ditch water bank may make temporary transfers of place of use without formal proceedings before the state engineer, and water rights placed in the acequia or community ditch water bank shall not be subject to loss for non-use during the period the rights are placed in the water bank. An acequia or community ditch water bank established pursuant to this section is not subject to recognition or approval by the interstate stream commission or the state engineer.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 54, § 1 and Laws 2003, ch. 132, § 1.

### **73-2-56. [Change in location, extension or reconstruction of ditch; consent of water users; expense.]**

The commissioners of any community ditch may alter, change the location of, enlarge, extend, or reconstruct such ditch for the purpose of providing greater efficiency in irrigation to the water users of said ditch, or when any part thereof shall have been destroyed by rain or in any other manner or for the purpose of increasing the cultivable [cultivable] area, provided that such alteration, change of location, enlargement, extension or reconstruction shall be affected [effected] only upon the consent in writing of a majority of the water users of said community ditch, filed with such commissioners, such majority to be determined by the same rule as applies to the election of commissioners of the acequia, and provided that such alteration, change of location, enlargement or extension shall in no wise impair the rights of prior water users from said community ditch, and provided further that the expense incurred in any such alteration, change of location, enlargement or extension shall be borne pro rata by those beneficially interested in same.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 39, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 151-457; 1941 Comp., § 77-1452; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-53.

### **73-2-57. [Crossing lands in reconstruction; compensation; determination; procedure.]**

Should they deem it necessary, the mayordomo may cut through the lands of any person or persons, by first obtaining their consent, by the community of such ditch offering to pay a compensation, to be agreed upon between the owner or owners of the lands through which the ditch is to be opened, and the parties interested in the said ditch. If the owner or owners, who shall be solicited to permit their lands to be ditched, in

the cases mentioned in the preceding section [73-2-56 NMSA 1978], should improperly refuse [refuse] or decline to accept the compensation offered by the parties interested in such ditch, or ask a compensation which the parties interested do not agree to on account of its exorbitance, in such case the mayordomo of said ditch shall lay the case before the justice of the peace [magistrate court] of the precinct in which such ditch may be situated, and it shall be the duty of the justice of the peace [magistrate court], to whom the case is presented, to appoint three men, experts, of known integrity, to establish a just compensation to be paid to the owner or owners solicited to permit their lands to be ditched through in the cases above mentioned.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 39, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 151-458; 1941 Comp., § 77-1453; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-54.

### **73-2-58. [Appraisers; oath.]**

Whenever the three experts shall be appointed as appraisers, before they enter upon their duties as such appraisers, they shall file in the office of the justice of the peace [magistrate], who appointed them, an oath to faithfully, legally and impartially discharge the duties for which they were appointed.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 39, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 151-459; 1941 Comp., § 77-1454; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-55.

### **73-2-59. [Appraisal; notice to landowners; contents; service; return.]**

Before proceeding to examine the land or lands over which the new ditch should be opened, the appraisers shall give the owner or owners of such land or lands, not less than three nor more than ten days' notice in writing of the time and place they will meet to examine and appraise said land or lands; such notice shall also contain a description as near as can be ascertained, of such proposed ditch, enlargement, extension or reconstruction, the point of entry and the direction thereof, upon said land or lands, and that at such time and place the said appraisers will hear and consider any evidence the owner or owners may desire to present as to the damages he or they will sustain by reason of his or their land or lands being so ditched. The notice herein provided for shall be served upon such owner or owners, and the returns made thereon by the constable of the precinct, or the sheriff of the county, in the same manner as service is made in civil cases, in justice of the peace courts [magistrate courts]; the notice and returns showing the manner in which the same was served shall be filed by the appraisers with the justice of the peace [magistrate] who appointed them, at the time they file their report.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 39, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 151-460; 1941 Comp., § 77-1455; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-56.

### **73-2-60. [Report of appraisers; contents.]**

Whenever any land or lands of any person or persons are to be appraised, as in the cases above mentioned, the experts who shall make such appraisal, shall make a report which shall be filed in the office of the justice of the peace [magistrate] who appointed them, setting forth therein the name of the person whose land was appraised, and the sum to be paid him by the parties interested in the public ditch for which the opening on the land is solicited; they shall also state in said report, in the most distinct manner possible, the direction and the place and point where the opening for such ditch shall be made upon said land.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 39, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 151-461; 1941 Comp., § 77-1456; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-57.

### **73-2-61. [Payment of appraised value; right to possession; forcible entry and detainer.]**

The parties interested shall possess the right of property in the land or lands paid for under the five preceding sections [73-2-56 to 73-2-60 NMSA 1978], and in case of legal resistance being made to the possession of the land by the parties interested in a public ditch, they may compel the person or persons who interpose such resistance to desist therefrom, by an action of forcible entry and detainer, as provided by law, but the parties interested shall first pay the appraised value of such land or lands provided that said appraisers shall be impartial persons.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 39, § 6; C.S. 1929, § 151-462; 1941 Comp., § 77-1457; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-58.

### **73-2-62. [Appeal from appraisal to district court.]**

Any person or persons aggrieved by the amount of damages assessed or allowed by any appraisers appointed as provided for in the foregoing sections, may appeal by himself, his agent or attorney to the district court of the county where the same was rendered, in the same manner as appeals are taken from judgments rendered in justice of the peace courts [magistrate courts], provided that the only issue on any such appeal shall be the amount of damages sustained by such landowner or owners.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 39, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 151-463; 1941 Comp., § 77-1458; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-59.

### **73-2-63. [Change in place of diversion; permit unnecessary.]**

It shall not be necessary for the officers of public community acequias established and in operation prior to March 19, 1907, to make any application to, or obtain any permit from, the state engineer or the board of water commissioners in order to change the place of diversion; provided that by such change no increase in the amount of water

appropriated shall be made beyond the amount to which the acequia was formerly entitled.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 26, § 1; Code 1915, § 5771; C.S. 1929, § 151-441; 1941 Comp., § 77-1459; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-60.

### **73-2-64. Interference with ditch; illegal water use; penalty; failure to prosecute; injunctive relief.**

A. A person shall not, contrary to the order of the mayordomo or commission, cut, break, stop up or otherwise interfere with any community ditch or dam in this state, or any contra or lateral acequia thereof, or take or use water from the same contrary to such orders. A person who violates a provision of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on complaint made before the nearest magistrate court, a warrant may issue for his arrest, as in case of any other offense against the state.

B. A criminal complaint for violations of the provisions of Subsection A of this section may be made by the district attorney or the mayordomo or commission of the ditch or acequia to the magistrate court in the county where the violation occurred. Upon conviction of a violation, the defendant shall be fined not less than three hundred dollars (\$300) or more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and in default of the payment of said fine, shall be confined in the county jail for a period of not less than five nor more than thirty days.

C. In addition to criminal prosecution, the district attorney or the mayordomo or commission of the ditch or acequia may file a civil complaint seeking a civil penalty not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for knowingly, intentionally or willfully violating the provisions of Subsection A of this section.

D. The remedies provided for in this section shall not be construed as limiting the right of the party bringing the civil or criminal complaint from seeking damages. In addition to the remedies provided in this section, the district attorney or the mayordomo or commission of the ditch or acequia may apply to the district court of the county where the violation occurred for an injunction restraining any person from violating or continuing to violate the provisions of Subsection A of this section.

E. It is the duty of the mayordomo in charge of any such ditch or acequia to prosecute in the name of the state any violation of this section whenever the mayordomo acquires knowledge thereof, and the mayordomo's failure so to do shall be deemed a misdemeanor; provided, however, that if the district attorney chooses to prosecute, the mayordomo shall not be required to do so. On conviction of violating the provisions of this subsection, the mayordomo shall be fined in a sum not less than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) or more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) or by imprisonment in the county jail for not less than ten or more than thirty days.

**History:** Laws 1923, ch. 81, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 151-465; 1941 Comp., § 77-1460; 1953 Comp., § 75-14-61; 2005, ch. 186, § 2.

### **73-2-65. Acequia commission; created; membership; terms.**

A. There is created the "acequia commission", which is administratively attached to the local government division of the department of finance and administration.

B. The acequia commission shall be appointed by the governor and shall consist of eleven members who reside in the irrigated areas of the state containing acequias. Members shall own land irrigated from an acequia or community ditch organized pursuant to a ditch or acequia statute. Each member appointed by the governor shall serve a term of four years.

C. The initial appointments to the acequia commission shall include the ten persons serving as members of the governor's acequia commission, organized pursuant to executive order 88-06, and one member of the public who has a background in business. Of the initial appointees, four members shall be appointed by lot for two-year terms, four members shall be appointed by lot for three-year terms and three members shall be appointed by lot for four-year terms.

D. The acequia commission shall meet at the call of the chairman not less than quarterly and not more than once a month. The chairman shall be elected from among the members of the commission.

**History:** Laws 1993, ch. 293, § 1.

### **73-2-66. Powers and duties.**

The acequia commission shall:

A. provide advice and assist the governor, legislature, office of the state engineer and interstate stream commission and the United States army corps of engineers in establishing acequia and community ditch rehabilitation priorities and other acequia and community ditch matters;

B. serve as a facilitator for communication between acequia and community ditch associations and state and federal agencies; and

C. review and comment on any plan or legislation affecting acequias or community ditches to the governor, the legislature, the secretary of agriculture and the interstate stream commission.

**History:** Laws 1993, ch. 293, § 2.

### **73-2-67. Legal counsel.**

The office of the attorney general shall represent and be the legal advisor to the acequia commission.

**History:** Laws 1993, ch. 293, § 3.

### **73-2-68. Per diem.**

The members of the acequia commission shall be paid in accordance with the Per Diem and Mileage Act [10-8-1 to 10-8-8 NMSA 1978] and shall receive no other compensation, perquisite or allowance.

**History:** Laws 1993, ch. 293, § 4.

## **ARTICLE 2A**

### **Acequia and Community Ditch Fund**

#### **73-2A-1. Short title.**

This act [73-2A-1 to 73-2A-3 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "Acequia and Community Ditch Fund Act".

**History:** Laws 1988, ch. 157, § 1.

#### **73-2A-2. Purpose of act.**

The purpose of the Acequia and Community Ditch Fund Act is to provide financial assistance to acequias and community ditch systems to develop hydrological studies, acquire technical and legal research and other information and services necessary to conserve and protect water for New Mexico's future through the adjudication of water rights.

**History:** Laws 1988, ch. 157, § 2.

#### **73-2A-3. Fund created.**

A. An "acequia and community ditch fund" is created in the state treasury, to be expended upon order of the director of the New Mexico department of agriculture to carry out the purposes of contracting with acequia and ditch associations constituting a majority of acequias or ditches within an adjudication suit or a separately administered portion of an adjudication suit to provide assistance to acequias and community ditch associations in the adjudication process, including historical studies, economic impact reports, expert witness fees, legal fees and other technical services related to the adjudication process.

B. Money in the acequia and community ditch fund may be used to enter into agreements for grants-in-aid to satisfy costs and expenses incurred by acequias and community ditch associations. The amount of funding provided to acequia and ditch associations in any given year shall be determined by a simple majority of a committee consisting of the director of the New Mexico department of agriculture, the chairman of the interstate stream commission and a third person who will be elected from within the New Mexico acequia commission. The committee shall consider financial need, progress of the adjudication and the trial schedule; however, the committee is not limited to these factors in awarding grant agreements. No more than one-fourth of the money allocated from the acequia and community ditch fund shall be allocated to one acequia association provided, however, that at least the eight most qualified applicant associations may be considered to receive money that is in the fund and available for any given fiscal year. The committee shall consider the state engineer's report on the eligibility and priority of applicants for funds. Disbursement of the fund shall be made upon a warrant drawn by the secretary of finance and administration transferring money in the fund to the New Mexico department of agriculture for expenditure pursuant to vouchers signed by the director or his representative. Balances in the fund at the end of any fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund and may be expended to carry out the purposes of the Acequia and Community Ditch Fund Act.

**History:** Laws 1988, ch. 157, § 3; 1989, ch. 324, § 34; 1991, ch. 76, § 1; 1993, ch. 99, § 1; 1994, ch. 30, § 1.

## **ARTICLE 3**

### **Ditches or Acequias; Special Provisions Governing Certain Counties**

#### **73-3-1. Officers; election; bonds; vacancies.**

The officers of community ditches or acequias shall consist of three commissioners and one mayordomo or superintendent, each of whom shall be the owner of an interest in the ditch or the water therein. The officers shall be elected biennially on the first Monday of October of the odd numbered years and shall assume the duties of their offices not later than the first Monday of the following November. On or before the first Monday of November, the commissioners shall organize by the election of one of their number as chairman, another as secretary and the other as treasurer. The mayordomo and the treasurer, separately, shall give a bond to the state in a sum to be fixed by the commissioners. The condition of the bonds [is] to be for the accounting of all money coming into their hands by virtue of their respective offices and for the faithful performance of their respective duties. Two commissioners shall constitute a quorum and be a full board for the transaction of business at all times. In the event of a vacancy in the office of a mayordomo, the commissioners shall immediately appoint a mayordomo or superintendent to hold office until his successor is elected and qualified. In case of a vacancy in the office of a commissioner, the other two commissioners and the mayordomo, or any two of them, shall immediately appoint his successor who shall

immediately qualify and hold his office until his successor is qualified. In case of the joint vacancy of two or more commissioners, a majority of the owners of the water rights in the ditch shall immediately appoint their successors who shall qualify and hold office as herein provided.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 1; Code 1915, § 5787; C.S. 1929, § 151-501; 1941 Comp., § 77-1501; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-1; Laws 1987, ch. 64, § 2.

### **73-3-2. [Compensation of officers.]**

The mayordomo shall receive such compensation for his services as may be mutually fixed between him and a majority of the owners of said ditch. The commissioners shall receive such compensation as may be mutually fixed between them and a majority of the owners of said ditch and upon failure to so fix such compensation, then they shall receive such compensation as is provided by law.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 7; Code 1915, § 5788; C.S. 1929, § 151-504; 1941 Comp., § 77-1502; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-2.

### **73-3-3. [Officers]; election; votes; canvass.**

The election for acequia or community ditch officers, under this article, shall, be held by the outgoing commissioners, under written rules and regulations to be prescribed by them. Only those having water rights in the acequia or ditch, and who are not delinquent in the payment of their assessments shall be allowed to vote, but votes may be cast by written proxy. All votes shall be in proportion to the interest of the voter in the ditch or water, or in proportion to the number or amount of his water rights, which for election purposes, shall never exceed the lands under irrigation the outgoing year. They shall canvass the votes cast and shall record and publicly announce the result of the election within twenty-four hours after the close of the same. Contests, if any, shall be commenced and conducted as provided by law in the case of general elections for county officers, but the notice of contest shall be filed within fifteen days after the result of the election is announced as herein required.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 2; Code 1915, § 5789; Laws 1921, ch. 129, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 151-505; 1941 Comp., § 77-1503; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-3.

### **73-3-4. [County ditches; duties of officers; labor; distribution of water; accounts.]**

The commissioners shall assess fatigue work or tasks of all parties owning water rights in said community ditches or acequias and shall regulate the price to be paid in lieu of said fatigue work, all of which shall be uniform. They shall also be the representatives of said acequias in all civil cases for or against the same. The mayordomo or superintendent shall be the executive officer of said ditch and have the



superintendence of all work thereon and of the distribution of the waters thereof, with the collection of fines, if any, and of the amounts to be paid in lieu of fatigue or task work: provided, that he shall turn over to the treasurer of said ditch all moneys thus received, taking his receipt therefor: provided, however, that with the consent and approval of the chairman of the commissioners of said ditch, he may retain of the moneys by him thus collected such sums as are necessary to pay for fatigue work as well as repairs necessary to be made upon said ditch or any bridges, flood gates, boxes or dams necessary to be constructed or repaired. He may also, with the consent and approval of a majority of the commissioners, use of the moneys in the treasury such sums as are necessary for such purposes, drawing his approval warrant against the treasurer of said ditch commissioners whose duty shall be to cash the same and mark such warrants "paid" and report them to the commissioners for cancellation and destruction. Said mayordomo shall make full written reports of all moneys received, expended and how expended and of all his doings as such officer, to the commissioners of said ditch, semiannually, on the first Monday in June and the last Monday of September: provided further, that the mayordomo shall make such further reports as may be required by said ditch commissioners. The treasurer of said ditch commissioners shall make such reports to the ditch commissioners of the moneys received, expended and how expended, and kept in his custody as such treasurer and of all his doings as such officer as are herein required of the mayordomo. The commissioners shall receive and pass upon the reports of the mayordomo and the treasurer herein provided for before their term of office expires, and if the same are found to be true and correct they shall approve them, otherwise they shall reject them, respectively. All proceedings of the commissioners relating to all subjects whatsoever shall be reduced to writing in a book or books kept for that purpose and all books and papers so kept by said commissioners and all reports made, filed or kept as herein required shall always be and remain public property, and shall be subject to the inspection of all persons therein concerned.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 3; Code 1915, § 5790; C.S. 1929, § 151-506; 1941 Comp., § 77-1504; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-4.

### **73-3-4.1. Commissioners; additional duties; approval of changes in place or purpose of use of water; appeals.**

Pursuant to rules or bylaws duly adopted by its members, an acequia or community ditch may require that a change in the point of diversion or place or purpose of use of a water right served by the acequia or community ditch, or a change in a water right so that it is moved into and then served by the acequia or community ditch shall be subject to the approval by the commissioners. The change may be denied only if the commissioners determine that it would be detrimental to the acequia or community ditch or its members. The commissioners shall render a written decision explaining the reasons for the decision. If the person proposing the change or a member of the acequia or community ditch is aggrieved by the decision of the commissioners, he may appeal the decision in the district court of the county in which the acequia or community ditch is located within thirty days of the date of the decision. The court may set aside,

reverse or remand the decision if it determines that the commissioners acted fraudulently, arbitrarily or capriciously or that they did not act in accordance with law.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 82, § 3 and 2003, ch. 135, § 3.

### **73-3-5. [Community ditches; laborers; refusing to work; fines.]**

The owners of said community ditches or their bosses or representatives shall labor therein in proportion to their lands under cultivation. It shall be their duty to furnish the number of laborers, proportionate to their lands, required by the mayordomo, at the time and place he may designate for the purposes mentioned in the foregoing section [73-3-4 NMSA 1978], and for the time he may deem necessary. If any person thus required shall wilfully neglect or refuse to comply with such requirements of the mayordomo, after having been duly notified by the mayordomo or his agent, he shall be fined, for each offense, in a sum not exceeding five dollars (\$5.00), for the benefit of said ditch or acequia, which shall be recovered by the mayordomo in a summary way, and in case of default in the payment of said fine, it may be recovered by the mayordomo before any justice of the peace [magistrate court] in the county, within fifteen days after such default, and in such cases, the mayordomo may be a competent witness to testify therein.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 4; Code 1915, § 5791; C.S. 1929, § 151-507; 1941 Comp., § 77-1505; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-5.

### **73-3-6. Persons in default in work or payments; right to use of water denied.**

No person, who has after written notice failed or refused to do his work or pay the amount assessed against him in lieu of such work upon the community ditch or acequia, shall be allowed to take or use any water from such community ditch or acequia or lateral thereof, while in default in such payment or failure to do such work.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-15-5.1, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 60, § 1.

### **73-3-7. [Inevitable accidents; excuse from labor.]**

In cases of inevitable accidents, such as continual and prolonged droughts, tempests or floods, producing the total or very material failure of crops or expectant crops, the commissioners may, in their discretion, totally or partially exempt the person or persons thus situated from the requirements of the foregoing section [73-3-5 NMSA 1978] relative to continuous labor for lands under cultivation as the circumstances of the case may require. Such exemption or exemptions shall be consistent with the facts and circumstances of the premises and shall not extend to lands thereafter irrigated. Such action by said commissioners shall be reduced to writing and shall become a part of their records.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 5; Code 1915, § 5792; C.S. 1929, § 151-508; 1941 Comp., § 77-1506; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-6.

### **73-3-8. [Mayordomo; failing to perform duties; malfeasance.]**

If any mayordomo of any community ditch or acequia, after having undertaken to serve as such, shall wilfully neglect or refuse to perform any of the duties of his office, or conduct himself with impropriety or injustice in his office as mayordomo or take any bribe in money, property or otherwise as inducement to act improperly, he shall, upon conviction before any justice of the peace [magistrate court] within the county where such offense is committed, be punished by a fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) or by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding thirty days or by both such fine and imprisonment, at the discretion of the court or jury trying the case.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 8; Code 1915, § 5794; C.S. 1929, § 151-511; 1941 Comp., § 77-1507; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-7.

### **73-3-9. [Ditch commissioner; neglect of duties.]**

Any wilful neglect of his duties or abuse of his powers by any ditch commissioner shall be deemed a misdemeanor and any such commissioner, upon conviction thereof before any justice of the peace [magistrate court] within the county where such offense is committed, shall be fined in a sum not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) recoverable in the manner provided by law.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 9; Code 1915, § 5795; C.S. 1929, § 151-512; 1941 Comp., § 77-1508; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-8.

### **73-3-10. [Appeals to district court.]**

In all cases of conviction under this article, when the fine assessed by the justice of the peace [magistrate court] is the sum of three dollars (\$3.00) or less, an appeal shall be granted to the district court only when all the accrued costs shall have been paid; which appeal shall be taken and conducted as all other appeals from the decision of justices of the peace [magistrates].

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 10; Code 1915, § 5796; C.S. 1929, § 151-513; 1941 Comp., § 77-1509; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-9.

### **73-3-11. Counties in which not in effect.**

None of the parts or provisions of this article or any section thereof shall apply or be construed to be in force or effect in any of the following counties, viz.: Dona Ana, Grant, Otero, Luna, Lincoln, Chaves, Eddy, Santa Fe, Guadalupe, Colfax, Union, Rio Arriba,

San Juan, Quay, McKinley, Roosevelt, as the same existed on the 11th day of March, 1903.

**History:** Laws 1903, ch. 32, § 12; Code 1915, § 5797; Laws 1917, ch. 68, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 151-514; 1941 Comp., § 77-1510; 1953 Comp., § 75-15-10.

## **ARTICLE 4**

### **Mill Ditches**

#### **73-4-1. [Mill ditches; course not to be changed.]**

The course of any mill ditch, already constructed shall not be changed, unless it be through some irrigating ditch to the cultivated lands which shall have the preference.

**History:** Laws 1899, ch. 61, § 1; Code 1915, § 5798; C.S. 1929, § 151-601; 1941 Comp., § 77-1701; 1953 Comp., § 75-16-1.

#### **73-4-2. [Right-of-way for mill ditch; appointment of arbitrators.]**

Whenever it may become necessary for the owner or owners of a mill to construct a mill ditch, when the same is to be constructed in whole or in part over the land of another owner, and the said owner does not permit the construction of said ditch, then and in that event, the owner of the mill and the owner of the land over which the ditch is to pass shall apply to the justice of the peace [magistrate], of the precinct asking him to appoint three arbitrators or assessors, each party shall name one and the justice [magistrate] shall name the third, but if the landowner refuses to name one then the justice [magistrate] shall name two and the owner of the mill one.

**History:** Laws 1899, ch. 61, § 2; Code 1915, § 5799; C.S. 1929, § 151-602; 1941 Comp., § 77-1702; 1953 Comp., § 75-16-2.

#### **73-4-3. [Arbitrators; assessment of damages; payment.]**

The justice of the peace [magistrate court] shall make a record of the fact that the arbitrators or assessors were appointed and shall swear them to act faithfully and impartially, as such arbitrators and to report to the said justice of the peace [magistrate] the amount by them assessed in order that the same may be turned over to the justice of the peace [magistrate] and by him turned over to the owner or owners of the land over which said ditch passes, and the said amount shall be paid in cash.

**History:** Laws 1899, ch. 61, § 3; Code 1915, § 5800; C.S. 1929, § 151-603; 1941 Comp., § 77-1703; 1953 Comp., § 75-16-3.

#### **73-4-4. [Mill owner may construct ditch on award.]**

If the owner of the mill for which the ditch is desired pays the amount assessed against him, as above required, he may construct his ditch as the same may be designated by the arbitrators and according to the record of the justice of the peace [magistrate court] of the report of the said arbitrators.

**History:** Laws 1899, ch. 61, § 4; Code 1915, § 5801; C.S. 1929, § 151-604; 1941 Comp., § 77-1704; 1953 Comp., § 75-16-4.

## **ARTICLE 5**

### **Water Users' Associations**

#### **73-5-1. [Water users associations; how organized.]**

Whenever the owners of lands, reservoirs or irrigation ditches in any county or adjoining counties in this state may desire to enter into mutual undertaking to construct, maintain and operate storage reservoirs, diversion dams, irrigating ditches, canals or other irrigation works, or to combine their several irrigating ditches, canals or other works into one or more irrigation systems, or to improve, enlarge or add to the same, for their mutual advantage, they may organize a water users' association under the provisions of this chapter [this article].

**History:** Laws 1909, ch. 76, § 1; Code 1915, § 5645; C.S. 1929, § 150-101; 1941 Comp., § 77-1601; 1953 Comp., § 75-17-1.

#### **73-5-2. Certificate of organization; contents.**

The incorporators of a water users' association shall execute a certificate setting forth:

A. the name of the association. No name shall be assumed that is in use by another association or corporation in this state, or so nearly similar as to lead to uncertainty or confusion;

B. the names of the incorporators;

C. the location of the association's principal office in this state;

D. the objects and purposes of the association, the county or counties in which its operations are to be carried on and the general description of the lands to be irrigated and the reservoirs, canals, ditches or works to be constructed, enlarged, combined or used under the management of the association;

E. the amount of capital stock and number and denomination of the shares, or if the incorporators do not desire to issue shares of stock, the plan and manner of acquiring

membership and of providing funds or means for the acquisition, construction, improvement and maintenance of its works and for its necessary expenses;

F. the period if any limited for the duration of the association;

G. the number and manner of electing the board of directors, trustees or governing board of the association, and may name the persons who shall serve as such for the first three months or until their successors are elected and qualified;

H. the address of its initial registered office and the name of its initial registered agent at that address; and

I. any provision, not inconsistent with Chapter 73, Article 5 NMSA 1978 or other law of this state, which the incorporators may choose to insert for the regulation and conduct of the business and affairs of the association, extending its membership, enlarging or changing the scope of its operations, creating and enforcing a lien upon the lands, reservoirs, canals, ditches, works and water rights of the association or its members for the cost of acquisition, construction, repair, improvement and maintenance of reservoirs, canals, ditches and other works, collecting the necessary funds for expenses and purposes of the association, defining or limiting its powers and for its dissolution and the distribution or other disposition of its property.

**History:** Laws 1909, ch. 76, § 2; Code 1915, § 5646; C.S. 1929, § 150-102; 1941 Comp., § 77-1602; 1953 Comp., § 75-17-2; 2001, ch. 200, § 82.

### **73-5-3. Acknowledgment; recording; evidence.**

The certificate shall be acknowledged as required for deeds of real estate and shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state. A copy thereof duly certified by the secretary of state shall be recorded in the office of the county clerk of the county or counties where the lands or works are located, and the certificate or a copy thereof duly certified by the secretary of state or county clerk shall be evidence in all courts and places.

**History:** Laws 1909, ch. 76, § 3; Code 1915, § 5647; C.S. 1929, § 150-103; 1941 Comp., § 77-1603; 1953 Comp., § 75-17-3; 2013, ch. 75, § 45.

### **73-5-4. [Water users associations; bodies corporate; powers.]**

Upon the filing of such certificate and copy thereof as provided in the preceding section [73-5-3 NMSA 1978] the persons so associating, their successors and those who may thereafter become members of said association, shall constitute a body corporate by the name set forth in such certificate and by such name may sue and be sued, and shall have capacity to make contracts, acquire, hold, enjoy, dispose of and convey property real and personal and to do any other act or thing necessary or proper for carrying out the purposes of their organization.

**History:** Laws 1909, ch. 76, § 4; Code 1915, § 5648; C.S. 1929, § 150-104; 1941 Comp., § 77-1604; 1953 Comp., § 75-17-4.

### **73-5-5. Amendments to certificate.**

Every such association may change its name, increase or decrease its capital stock or membership, change the location of its principal office in this state, extend the period of its existence and make such other amendment, change or alteration as may be desired, not inconsistent with Chapter 73, Article 5 NMSA 1978 or other law of this state, by a resolution adopted by a vote of two-thirds in interest of the shareholders or members present at any regular or special meeting duly held upon such notice as the bylaws provide or, in the absence of such provision, upon twenty days' notice in writing given personally or by mail. The notice shall state that the amendment or change is to be voted upon at such meeting and the nature and purpose thereof, and provided, further, that a majority in interest of the shareholders or members are present at the meeting in person or by duly authorized representative. A certified copy of the resolution with the affidavit of the president and secretary that the resolution was duly adopted by a two-thirds' vote of the shareholders or members at a meeting held in accordance with the provisions of this section shall be filed and recorded as provided for filing and recording the original certificate of incorporation. The certificate of incorporation shall be deemed to be amended accordingly and a copy of the certificate of amendment certified by the secretary of state or the county clerk shall be accepted as evidence of such change or amendment in all courts and places.

**History:** Laws 1909, ch. 76, § 5; Code 1915, § 5649; C.S. 1929, § 150-105; 1941 Comp., § 77-1605; 1953 Comp., § 75-17-5; 2013, ch. 75, § 46.

### **73-5-6. [First meeting; notice.]**

The first meeting of every such association shall be called by a notice signed by a majority of the incorporators, or by the directors, trustees or governing board named in the certificate of incorporation, which notice shall be served personally or by mail at least ten days prior to the date for said meeting.

**History:** Laws 1909, ch. 76, § 6; Code 1915, § 5650; C.S. 1929, § 150-106; 1941 Comp., § 77-1606; 1953 Comp., § 75-17-6.

### **73-5-7. [Bylaws, rules and regulations.]**

The power to make and alter bylaws or rules and regulations for the management and operation of the works of the association, the distribution of the waters thereof and the control and conduct of its business and affairs shall be in the shareholders or members, but the incorporators may, in the certificate of incorporation, confer such power upon the directors, trustees or governing board. Bylaws or rules and regulations made or altered under power so conferred may nevertheless be altered or repealed by the shareholders or members.

**History:** Laws 1909, ch. 76, § 7; Code 1915, § 5651; C.S. 1929, § 150-107; 1941 Comp., § 77-1607; 1953 Comp., § 75-17-7.

### **73-5-8. [Officers; selection; terms; vacancies.]**

Such associations may have such officers or agents chosen or appointed in such manner and for such terms as may be provided by the bylaws. Vacancies occurring among such officers or among the directors, trustees or governing board shall be filled as provided by the bylaws, or in the absence of such provision by the directors, trustees or governing board.

**History:** Laws 1909, ch. 76, § 8; Code 1915, § 5652; C.S. 1929, § 150-108; 1941 Comp., § 77-1608; 1953 Comp., § 75-17-8.

### **73-5-9. Rights-of-way; eminent domain.**

Such associations shall have the right of way over all property formerly belonging to the territory of New Mexico, for its canals, ditches or other works and shall have and exercise the same right to enter upon property to make surveys, and the same right to take and acquire property and rights-of-way for their reservoirs, canals, ditches and works, as is provided by the Eminent Domain Code [42A-1-1 to 42A-1-33 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 1909, ch. 76, § 9; Code 1915, § 5653; C.S. 1929, § 150-109; 1941 Comp., § 77-1609; 1953 Comp., § 75-17-9; Laws 1981, ch. 125, § 56.

## **ARTICLE 6**

### **Drainage Districts; Formation**

#### **73-6-1. Drainage district; petition for; contents.**

Whenever twenty-five percent of the adult owners of lands owning one-fourth of the lands within any district of land to be reclaimed or benefited, desire to construct one or more drains or ditches, or to acquire by purchase or otherwise, drains theretofore constructed, or outlets for drains, for the promotion of agricultural interests and the drainage of said lands or desire to maintain and keep in repair any such drain or ditch theretofore constructed or to protect any such drain or ditch or the land so drained from floods, such owners may file in the district court of any county in which the lands, or any part of them shall lie, a petition setting forth:

- A. the proposed name of said drainage district;
- B. the necessity of the proposed drainage work, describing the necessity;
- C. a general description of the proposed starting points, routes and termini of the proposed drains or ditches;



D. a general description of the drain or drains of ditch or ditches theretofore constructed, which it is intended to maintain and keep in repair, and of the land thereunder, which it is intended to protect from floods;

E. a general description of the lands proposed to be included in said district;

F. the names of the owners of all lands in said district, when known;

G. if the purpose of said petitioners is the enlargement, repair and maintenance of a ditch or drain [or] other work theretofore constructed, said petition shall give a general description of the same, with such particulars as may be deemed important;

H. said petition shall pray for the organization of a drainage district by the name and with the boundaries proposed, and for the appointment of commissioners for the execution of this and the following sections.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 1; Code 1915, § 1877; Laws 1921, ch. 166, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 40-101; 1941 Comp., § 77-1801; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-1.

### **73-6-2. [Petition amendment; consolidation.]**

The court may at any time permit the petition to be amended in form and substance to conform to the facts, if the facts justify the organization of a drainage district. Several similar petitions for the organization of the same district may be circulated, and when filed, shall together be regarded as one petition having as many signers as there are separate adult signers on the several petitions filed, who own lands within said proposed drainage district. All petitions for the organization of said district filed prior to the hearing on said petition shall be considered by the court, the same as if filed with the first petitions placed on file, and the signatures thereon contained shall be counted in determining whether sufficient landowners have signed said petition.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 2; Code 1915, § 1878; C.S. 1929, § 40-102; 1941 Comp., § 77-1802; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-2.

### **73-6-3. [Noncontiguous lands.]**

Said territory need not be contiguous, providing that agricultural interests will be promoted by such drainage of each part thereof, and the benefits of the proposed work in each part will exceed the damages from and cost of said proposed work in each part; and provided, further, that the court shall be satisfied that said proposed work can be more cheaply done if in a single district than otherwise.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 3; Code 1915, § 1879; C.S. 1929, § 40-103; 1941 Comp., § 77-1803; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-3.

### **73-6-4. [Petition; hearing; notice.]**

On such petition being filed the court or judge thereof shall make an order fixing a time and place of hearing thereon and ordering notice; thereupon the clerk of said court, for the county in which the proceedings are instituted, shall cause twenty days' notice of the filings of such petition to be given:

A. by posting notice thereof in at least five public places in the district in which said work is to be done;

B. by serving or causing to be served a copy of such notice on each owner or reputed owner of land within proposed district, residing in any county in which any lands in said proposed district are situated either personally or by leaving a copy thereof at his last usual place of abode, with a person of suitable age and discretion, to whom its contents shall be explained; and

C. by publishing a copy thereof at least once a week for three successive weeks in some newspaper published in each county from which any part of the district is proposed to be taken. If there be no newspaper in any such county, such notice may be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the district.

Such notice shall state:

A. in what court said petition is filed;

B. state briefly the starting points, routes and termini of said drains or ditches;

C. give a general description of the proposed work;

D. give the proposed boundaries of said district (or a general description of all the lands in said proposed district);

E. give the name proposed for said drainage district; and

F. shall also state the time and place by the court fixed when and where the petitioners will ask a hearing on said petition.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 4; Code 1915, § 1880; C.S. 1929, § 40-104; 1941 Comp., § 77-1804; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-4.

### **73-6-5. [Nonresidents; petition; notice.]**

If any of the owners or reputed owners of land in said district are nonresidents of the county or counties in which the proposed district lies, the petition shall be accompanied by an affidavit giving the names and post-office addresses of such nonresidents, if such are known, and if such are unknown, shall state that upon diligent inquiry their names or post-office addresses (whichever may be the fact) cannot be ascertained. The clerk of

the court shall mail a copy of the notice aforesaid to each of said nonresidents whose post-office address is known, within six days after the publication of the same.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 5; Code 1915, § 1881; C.S. 1929, § 40-105; 1941 Comp., § 77-1805; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-5.

### **73-6-6. [Notice; proof of service.]**

The certificates of the clerk of the court, or other public officer, or the affidavit of any person who knows the facts, affixed to a copy of said notice, shall be sufficient evidence of the posting, serving, mailing or publication thereof.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 6; Code 1915, § 1882; C.S. 1929, § 40-106; 1941 Comp., § 77-1806; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-6.

### **73-6-7. [Notice; personal service.]**

Personal service of said notice on or service by leaving at the usual place of abode of all owners or reputed owners of lands within said district shall give the court complete jurisdiction, without posting, publication or mailing of said notice.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 7; Code 1915, § 1883; C.S. 1929, § 40-107; 1941 Comp., § 77-1807; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-7.

### **73-6-8. [Notice; owners not served.]**

If it shall be found before the hearing on a petition for the organization of a drainage district, that one or more owners or reputed owners of land in said district have not been duly served with notice of hearing on said petition, the court, or presiding judge, shall not thereby lose jurisdiction. The court, or presiding judge in such case shall adjourn the hearings, make an order directing the serving of said notice upon said landowner and fixing the time and manner of service of such notice, which notice shall notify him to appear at said adjourned time and place and be heard on said petition.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 8; Code 1915, § 1884; C.S. 1929, § 40-108; 1941 Comp., § 77-1808; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-8.

### **73-6-9. [Notice; time of service.]**

Said notice shall be served personally or by leaving at the usual place of abode of said unserved owners, or reputed owners as in Section 73-6-4 NMSA 1978 provided not less than eight days before said hearing or published not less than fourteen days before said adjourned hearing, in some newspaper published in the county in which said owner's lands lie, or if no newspaper be published in said county, then in some newspaper of general circulation in the district.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 9; Code 1915, § 1885; C.S. 1929, § 40-109; 1941 Comp., § 77-1809; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-9.

### **73-6-10. [Hearing; failure of service.]**

Upon the adjourned day the same proceedings, adjournments, trial, findings and orders may be had as in case of complete service of notice in the first instance. In case of failure to mail said notice as herein required, the court or judge may order the same mailed at least fourteen days before said adjourned hearing. In case of failure to publish or post notice, as in this chapter required, the court or judge may adjourn said hearing for sufficient time to permit the due posting and publication of said notice, and order said notice posted or published as in Section 73-6-4 NMSA 1978 directed. In case of adjournment to permit notice to be given the notice shall state the fact of such adjournment and the time and place of hearing pursuant to said adjournment.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 10; Code 1915, § 1886; C.S. 1929, § 40-110; 1941 Comp., § 77-1810; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-10.

### **73-6-11. [Hearing; objections.]**

On the day fixed for hearing on such petition all parties owning lands, or any interests or easements in land, within said proposed district, or who would be affected thereby, may appear and contest:

- A. the sufficiency of the petition;
- B. the sufficiency of the signers of the petition;
- C. the sufficiency of the notice;
- D. the constitutionality of the law; and

E. the jurisdiction of the court, specifying their objections to such jurisdiction; and the petitioners and contestants may, on the trial day offer any competent evidence in regard thereto. All notices of contest shall be in writing and shall clearly specify the grounds of contest.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 11; Code 1915, § 1887; C.S. 1929, § 40-111; 1941 Comp., § 77-1811; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-11.

### **73-6-12. [Hearing and determination.]**

The court shall hear and determine whether or not the petition contains the signatures of twenty-five percent of the adult owners of lands within the said proposed district and who represent one-fourth in area of the lands proposed to be affected by said work and shall determine all questions of law arising on said contest. The district

court in which such petition shall be filed or the judge thereof may adjourn the hearing from time to time for want of sufficient notice or to give time to prepare for trial or for other good cause.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 12; Code 1915, § 1888; Laws 1921, ch. 166, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 40-112; 1941 Comp., § 77-1812; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-12.

### **73-6-13. [Proof of ownership.]**

The affidavit of any three or more of the signers of said petition stating that they have examined it, and are acquainted with the locality of said district and that the signers of said petition are adult owners or reputed owners of lands in said district, to satisfy Section 73-6-1 NMSA 1978 may be taken as prima facie evidence of the facts therein stated. And the affidavit of any petitioner or other landowner before such court, or represented before the court, giving the name of affiant and his or her ownerships of the lands, described therein, shall be prima facie evidence to the court of such facts.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 13; Code 1915, § 1889; C.S. 1929, § 40-113; 1941 Comp., § 77-1813; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-13.

### **73-6-14. [Petition; deed made to defeat.]**

Any deed made for the purpose of establishing or defeating the prayer of said petition, and not made in good faith and for a valuable consideration shall be taken and held to be a fraud, and the grantee therein shall not be considered as the owner of the land described therein.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 14; Code 1915, § 1890; C.S. 1929, § 40-114; 1941 Comp., § 77-1814; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-14.

### **73-6-15. [Petition; purchasers after notice of petition.]**

All purchasers of land within any drainage district or proposed drainage district after notice of such petition or any other notice provided by this article, shall have been given, or after such petition as hereinbefore referred to has been filed, shall be deemed to have purchased the same with notice thereof and shall be bound thereby to the same extent as the vendor of such lands would have been bound.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 15; Code 1915, § 1891; C.S. 1929, § 40-115; 1941 Comp., § 77-1815; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-15.

### **73-6-16. [Petition; insufficient signatures.]**

If the court, or presiding judge thereof, after hearing any and all competent evidence that may be offered for and against the said petition, shall find that same has not been

signed as herein required, the said petition shall be dismissed at the cost of the petitioners, and judgment shall be entered against said petitioners for the amount of said costs.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 16; Code 1915, § 1892; C.S. 1929, § 40-116; 1941 Comp., § 77-1816; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-16.

### **73-6-17. [Finding sufficient number of signers; certificate; calling election for drainage commissioners.]**

But if it shall appear that the petition has been so signed, the court or judge shall so find, and shall certify such fact to the board of county commissioners of the county or counties in which such district is situated, and said commissioners shall call an election for the election of commissioners of the said drainage district which said call for election shall be in the same form as proclamations for elections now provided by law, and such election shall be held within thirty days after the receipt of the certificate from the district court as provided for herein.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 17; Code 1915, § 1893; Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 40-117; 1941 Comp., § 77-1817; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-17.

### **73-6-18. [Qualifications of voters; application of general election laws.]**

At such election and at all elections held under the provisions of this act [73-6-17 to 73-6-25, 73-6-33 NMSA 1978], all resident freeholders who are the owners of land within the proposed drainage district, or other evidences of title to such lands, who are qualified electors under the general election laws of the state, shall be entitled to vote, and none others. Insofar as applicable, the general election laws of the state, except requirements for registration, and except as in this act otherwise provided, shall govern all elections under this act.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 40-118; 1941 Comp., § 77-1818; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-18.

### **73-6-19. [Elected by plurality vote.]**

At all elections held under the provisions of this act [73-6-17 to 73-6-25, 73-6-33 NMSA 1978], the commissioners or persons receiving the highest number of votes cast by the qualified electors of the district shall be declared to be elected.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 40-119; 1941 Comp., § 77-1819; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-19.

### **73-6-20. [Ballots.]**

For the first election to be held under the provisions of this act [73-6-17 to 73-6-25, 73-6-33 NMSA 1978], requisite ballots shall be provided under the direction of the board of county commissioners; and at all elections subsequent to the said first election, all such ballots shall be provided by the commissioners of the drainage district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 40-120; 1941 Comp., § 77-1820; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-20.

### **73-6-21. ["Resident freeholder" defined.]**

Any person residing within any county in which any portion of a drainage or proposed drainage district shall lie, and who is the owner of agricultural land within the limits of the district, shall, for the purposes of this act [73-6-17 to 73-6-25, 73-6-33 NMSA 1978], be considered a resident freeholder.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 40-121; 1941 Comp., § 77-1821; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-21.

### **73-6-22. [Determining and declaring result of election.]**

On the second Monday next succeeding the first election provided for by this act [73-6-17 to 73-6-25, 73-6-33 NMSA 1978], the board of county commissioners shall meet and proceed to canvass the votes cast at such election and declare the result as by this act provided.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 6; C.S. 1929, § 40-122; 1941 Comp., § 77-1822; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-22.

### **73-6-23. [Election precincts; polling places; election judges and clerks.]**

For the purposes of the first election hereinbefore provided for, if, in the judgment of the board of county commissioners, it is necessary so to do, said board may establish election precincts and polling places in addition to the number of voting precincts provided by law, and define the boundaries thereof, and such precincts may thereafter be changed by the commissioners of such drainage district. In the event of additional election precincts and polling places being designated as aforesaid, judges of election for each such precinct shall be appointed, one of whom shall act as clerk of election.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 40-123; 1941 Comp., § 77-1823; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-23.

### **73-6-24. [Time for holding second and subsequent elections; commissioners holding over.]**

Regular elections of any such district shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of December of each second calendar year following the first election hereinbefore provided for, and the commissioners so elected at each of said elections shall hold their offices until their successors are elected and have qualified in accordance with the provisions of this act [73-6-17 to 73-6-25, 73-6-33 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 40-124; 1941 Comp., § 77-1824; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-24.

### **73-6-25. [Commissioners; oath; bond; quorum; concurrence of majority.]**

Before entering upon their duties, such commissioners shall take and subscribe an oath to support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state of New Mexico, to faithfully and impartially discharge their duties as such commissioners and to render a true account of their duties to the district court within whose district the said drainage district is located, whenever required by law or the order of the said court, and shall execute a bond running to the state of New Mexico to be filed with said clerk for the benefit of the parties interested, in an amount to be fixed by the said district court or presiding judge thereof, with sureties to be approved by the court or presiding judge, conditioned for the faithful discharge of their duties as such commissioners, and the faithful accounting for and application of all moneys which shall come into their hands as such commissioners. A majority shall constitute a quorum, and a concurrence of a majority in any matter within their duties shall be sufficient for its determination.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 18; Code 1915, § 1894; Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 40-125; 1941 Comp., § 77-1825; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-25.

### **73-6-26. [Appointments to fill expired terms; time; notice.]**

Appointments to fill expired terms in the office of drainage commissioners shall be made by the presiding judge of the district court of the county having jurisdiction of the drainage district at the courthouse therein, during the first ten days of September, or as soon thereafter as possible, on a day fixed by the court at least thirty days before such appointment is to be made and a written notice of the time fixed, mailed under direction of the court to each landowner of the district in each district in which such terms expire.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 20; Code 1915, § 1896; C.S. 1929, § 40-126; 1941 Comp., § 77-1826; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-26.

### **73-6-27. [Commissioners; vacancies.]**

Vacancies in the board may be filled by such judge at any time, the commissioners appointed to hold [office] for the residue of the unexpired term. The removal of any



commissioner from the county or counties in which lands of such district are situated shall render his office vacant.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 21; Code 1915, § 1897; C.S. 1929, § 40-127; 1941 Comp., § 77-1827; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-27.

### **73-6-28. [Commissioners; accounts; records; vouchers.]**

The commissioners shall keep an accurate record of all moneys collected on account of the work under their charge, and of all payments made by them, and shall take vouchers for such payments and shall keep full, accurate and true minutes of all their proceedings.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 22; Code 1915, § 1898; C.S. 1929, § 40-128; 1941 Comp., § 77-1828; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-28.

### **73-6-29. [Commissioners; annual report.]**

On the first Tuesday of September of each year they shall file in the office of the clerk of the court having jurisdiction in the matter an itemized statement of all their receipts and disbursements and leave said report in such office for examination by parties interested at all times.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 23; Code 1915, § 1899; C.S. 1929, § 40-129; 1941 Comp., § 77-1829; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-29.

### **73-6-30. [Commissioners; compensation; expenses.]**

They shall receive for their services such compensation as the court or presiding judge thereof may determine. They shall also receive their actual reasonable expenses.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 24; Code 1915, § 1900; C.S. 1929, § 40-130; 1941 Comp., § 77-1830; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-30.

### **73-6-31. [Commissioners; court to control; contempt.]**

They shall at all times be under the control and direction of the court or presiding judge, and shall obey its or his directions; failure [failing] so to do they shall forfeit their compensation and be dealt with summarily as for contempt.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 25; Code 1915, § 1901; C.S. 1929, § 40-131; 1941 Comp., § 77-1831; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-31.

### **73-6-32. [Commissioners; bonds; liability.]**

Suit may also be brought upon their bonds, in the name of the state and the amount recovered shall be applied to the construction of the work or to the party injured, as justice may require.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 26; Code 1915, § 1902; C.S. 1929, § 40-132; 1941 Comp., § 77-1832; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-32.

### **73-6-33. [Commissioners; organization; examination of lands; report.]**

Within ten days after said commissioner [commissioners] shall be elected and qualified they shall meet and organize by electing one of their number president and one secretary, and as soon as may be thereafter, they shall personally examine the lands in said district and make a preliminary report to the court, which report shall state:

A. whether said proposed work is necessary, or would be of utility in carrying out the purposes of the petition;

B. whether the proposed work would promote agricultural interests, and whether there are any lands described in said petition which would not be benefitted by such improvement;

C. whether the total benefits from said proposed work will exceed the cost thereof together with the damages resulting therefrom; and in arriving at this they shall include all benefits and all damages resulting therefrom both within and without said district;

D. said commissioners shall in said report fix as near as may be and report to the court the boundaries of said proposed drainage district. Said boundaries shall not be so changed from those in the petition as to deprive the court of jurisdiction by reason of not having on the petition the required number of signers owning land within said changed boundaries.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 27; Code 1915, § 1903; Laws 1919, ch. 156, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 40-133; 1941 Comp., § 77-1833; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-33.

### **73-6-34. [Commissioners to report.]**

If said proposed work as in the petition described, is not best suited to carry out the purposes of the petition the commissioners shall consider and base their report upon some other plan best suited to carry out those purposes and propose to the court the plan by them recommended.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 28; Code 1915, § 1904; C.S. 1929, § 40-134; 1941 Comp., § 77-1834; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-34.

### **73-6-35. [Commissioners; hearing on report.]**

Upon the filing of the preliminary report the court or the presiding judge thereof shall by order fix a time and place when and where the same shall be heard at some general or special term of said court, not less than thirty days from the filing of said report. Notice of the time and place of hearing upon said preliminary report shall be given to all interested persons by publishing a brief notice of the filing of said report, including a brief statement of the substance of said report in one or more newspapers published in each county in which any land in said proposed drainage district shall be situated (or if no newspaper is published in said county, in one or more newspapers of general circulation of the district) once in each week for three consecutive weeks prior to the day appointed for hearing thereon. Said notice shall describe all lands by said report included in said district, which were not included therein by the petition, and state that such lands are to be included in said district which were by the petition included therein and shall state that such lands are to be excluded from said district.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 29; Code 1915, § 1905; C.S. 1929, § 40-135; 1941 Comp., § 77-1835; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-35.

### **73-6-36. [Commissioners; report; hearing; adjournment.]**

Upon the day fixed for hearing upon said report, said court may adjourn said hearing for good cause or may proceed to hear, try and determine all issues arising upon said report.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 30; Code 1915, § 1906; C.S. 1929, § 40-136; 1941 Comp., § 77-1836; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-36.

### **73-6-37. [Commissioners; report; remonstrance.]**

Any interested party may appear and remonstrate against said report or any material part thereof. All remonstrances shall be in writing, be verified on oath, be filed at least five days before the day fixed for hearing and shall set forth the facts upon which they are based.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 31; Code 1915, § 1907; C.S. 1929, § 40-137; 1941 Comp., § 77-1837; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-37.

### **73-6-38. [Lands added to; notice to owners.]**

When lands are added to the district the owners thereof shall be served with said notice as provided for serving of notice of hearing on the petition.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 32; Code 1915, § 1908; C.S. 1929, § 40-138; 1941 Comp., § 77-1838; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-38.

### **73-6-39. [Commissioners report; trial; judgment; costs.]**

All issues arising upon said preliminary report shall be tried by the court without a jury. If the court shall find in favor of the remonstrance, or if said report be that the proposed work will not promote the agricultural interests, or that the benefits from said proposed work will not exceed the damages and cost of construction, and no remonstrance against said report is filed, the petition shall be dismissed and the costs taxed against the petitioners, and judgment entered therefor, as in Section 73-7-12 NMSA 1978, hereinafter provided.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 33; Code 1915, § 1909; C.S. 1929, § 40-139; 1941 Comp., § 77-1839; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-39.

### **73-6-40. [Commissioners report; trial; findings; confirmation.]**

But if the preliminary report be that the benefits of said proposed work (or work by the commissioners proposed) will exceed the damages and the cost of construction and that the agricultural interests will be promoted thereby, and no remonstrance thereto is filed, or if on the trial of the issues made on said report the court finds that the benefits will exceed the damages and cost of construction, and that the agricultural interests will be promoted by said proposed work, the court shall make and file such findings in writing and make an order confirming said report or directing amendment of the report to conform to the findings of said court. And when so amended the court shall by order confirm the same and direct said commissioners to proceed with said work with all convenient speed.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 34; Code 1915, § 1910; C.S. 1929, § 40-140; 1941 Comp., § 77-1840; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-40.

### **73-6-41. [Commissioners report; findings final; appeal to Supreme Court.]**

Such findings and order shall be final and conclusive unless appealed from, to the supreme court within thirty days after filing thereof.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 35; Code 1915, § 1911; C.S. 1929, § 40-141; 1941 Comp., § 77-1841; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-41.

### **73-6-42. [Name; boundaries; corporation; powers.]**

Upon entering of such order of confirmation of said preliminary report of record, such drainage district shall be, and is thereby declared to be organized as a drainage district by the name mentioned in said petition, or such other name as the court shall fix, with the boundaries fixed by the order confirming the report of said commissioners, to be a

body corporate by said name fixed in said order, with the right to sue and be sued, to adopt and use a seal and to have perpetual succession.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 36; Code 1915, § 1912; C.S. 1929, § 40-142; 1941 Comp., § 77-1842; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-42.

### **73-6-43. [Commissioners; powers.]**

The commissioners appointed as aforesaid and their successors in office shall from the entry of such order of confirmation, constitute the corporate authority of said drainage district, and shall exercise the functions conferred on them by law, and do all things and perform all acts necessary to the construction and preservation of the proposed work.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 37; Code 1915, § 1913; C.S. 1929, § 40-143; 1941 Comp., § 77-1843; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-43.

### **73-6-44. [Conditions precedent to formation of drainage district.]**

All proceedings herein required, prior to the entry of such order of confirmation of record, shall be deemed to be and are hereby declared to be necessary to the formation of said body corporate.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 38; Code 1915, § 1914; C.S. 1929, § 40-144; 1941 Comp., § 77-1844; 1953 Comp., § 75-19-44.

## **ARTICLE 7**

## **Drainage Districts; Construction, Operation and Maintenance**

### **73-7-1. [Commissioners; engineers; surveys; plans; report.]**

As soon as may be after the confirmation of the said preliminary report, or within such time as the court may direct, said commissioners shall employ a competent drainage engineer and proceed to have all necessary levels taken and surveys made, and shall lay out said proposed work, make a map thereof and plans, profiles and other specifications thereof and report in writing to the court.

A. Whether the starting point, routes and termini of proposed work and the proposed location thereof, as in the petition contained, are in all respects proper and feasible, and, if not, shall report such as are most proper and feasible.

B. If it be found necessary to change the boundaries of said proposed district, as by them previously fixed, they shall report said proposed change, and, if possible, shall

report the names, residence and post-office addresses of the owner or owners of all lands affected by said change in boundaries, but no such change in boundaries shall be made as to deprive the court of jurisdiction; provided, however, that if the owners of lands adjacent to the district petition to have their lands brought in to the district such may be considered the same as original petitioners in making changes of boundaries.

C. What lands within the district, as by them reported will be injured by the proposed work, if any, and they shall therein award to each tract, lot, easement of interest by whomsoever held, the amount of damages which they shall determine will be caused to the same by the proposed work.

D. What lands within the district as by them reported will be benefited by the proposed work and they shall assess against each tract, lot and easement by whomsoever held the amount of benefits which they determine will be caused to the same by the proposed work or the damages inflicted by same on the district. The benefits or damages assessed as provided in this section are hereinafter referred to as "assessment of benefits."

E. They shall also determine and report to the court the total amount, as near as they can determine, that said proposed work will cost, which amount shall include all incidental expenses, the reasonable cost of organizing said district, costs of proceeding and all probable damage to lands, both within and without the district, together with a reasonable attorney fee for the petitioners, which cost will hereinafter be referred to as "cost of construction."

F. If the cost of construction of any particular part of the work so proposed to be done should be assessed upon any particular tract or tracts, lot or lots of land, or upon any corporation or corporations, individual or individuals, company or companies not incorporated, the commissioners shall so specify, and in their report they shall fix and determine the sums which should be assessed against said tracts, lots and corporations, individuals, companies not incorporated and assess such sum against said tracts, lots, corporations, individuals, companies not incorporated.

G. And if any corporation, individual or individuals, company or companies not incorporated or public highway or highways would, in the judgment of said commissioners, derive special benefits from the whole or any part of such proposed work, the commissioners shall so report and assess those benefits and assess against the same its proportionate share of the costs of said proposed work. The word "corporation" wherever in this act contained, shall be construed to include:

- (1) railroad companies;
- (2) other private corporations of all kinds;
- (3) towns;

- (4) cities;
- (5) villages; and
- (6) other drainage districts.

H. They shall apportion and assess the part of this "cost of construction" not assessed as in Subdivision [Subsections] F and G of this section against the several benefited tracts, lots and easements in said drainage district, in proportion to the benefits which they have assessed against the same by setting down opposite each tract, lot or easement, the sum so apportioned to each. The assessments which together make up the cost of construction as above defined, are herein referred to as "assessments for construction."

I. The commissioners shall further report to the court the probable cost of keeping said proposed work in repair after it is completed.

J. They shall include in their said report said map, plans and other specifications, and file the same with their report.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 39; Code 1915, § 1915; C.S. 1929, § 40-145; 1941 Comp., § 77-1901; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-1.

### **73-7-2. [Commissioners; power over plans.]**

The commissioners shall not be confined to the points of commencement, routes or termini of the drains or ditches, or the number, extent or size of the same or the location, plan or extent of any drain, ditch or other work, as proposed by the petitioners, but shall locate, design, lay out and plan the same in such manner as to them shall seem best, to promote the agricultural interests and to drain, or to protect the lands of the parties interested with the least damage and the greatest benefit to all lands affected thereby. And any plan proposed by the commissioners, may on the application of any person interested, on the hearing hereinafter provided for, or on the application of the commissioners, be altered by the court, by written order, in such manner as shall appear to the court to be just.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 40; Code 1915, § 1916; C.S. 1929, § 40-146; 1941 Comp., § 77-1902; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-2.

### **73-7-3. [Change of boundaries.]**

If the commissioners find that the proposed district as described in the petition filed, will not embrace all of the lands that will be benefited by the proposed work, or that it will include lands that will not be benefited and are not necessary to be included in said district for any purpose, they shall extend or contract the boundaries of the proposed district so as to include or exclude all such lands, as the case may be; and the

boundaries adopted and reported by them, may, upon the hearing of their report, as hereinafter provided, upon their application, or that of any person interested, be altered by the court in such manner as shall appear to be just; provided, that the alteration of boundaries as aforesaid shall not have the effect of so far enlarging or contracting the proposed district as to render such petition void or dismissable. Said report shall be filed with the clerk of the court.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 41; Code 1915, § 1917; C.S. 1929, § 40-147; 1941 Comp., § 77-1903; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-3.

#### **73-7-4. [Report; notice of hearing.]**

Upon the filing of said report, the court shall make and enter an order fixing the time and place when and where all persons interested may appear and remonstrate against the confirmations thereof, and the clerk of said court shall cause notice of the time and place of such hearing to be given to all parties interested, which notice shall contain a brief description of the lands benefited and damaged, together with the net damage awarded to the several tracts, parcels, easements and corporations to which damages are awarded and the sum in each case assessed for construction against said several benefited parcels, tracts, easements and corporations.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 42; Code 1915, § 1918; C.S. 1929, § 40-148; 1941 Comp., § 77-1904; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-4.

#### **73-7-5. [Publication of report; notice; service of.]**

Said notice shall be published for at least three successive weeks, prior to the day set for the hearing in one newspaper published in each county in which said lands, or any part thereof within said district are situated (and if no newspaper is published in said county, in some newspaper of general circulation in the district), and by serving a copy of such notice on each of the persons, or corporations, by said report recommended to be assessed, or whose lands are by said report recommended to be included in said district, and who reside in any of the counties out of which the proposed district is formed, at least 20 days before the day of hearing in the same manner that a summons is required to be served, provided, absence from the county of such person or corporation shall excuse personal service, whereupon due publication of such notice shall be sufficient service.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 43; Code 1915, § 1919; C.S. 1929, § 40-149; 1941 Comp., § 77-1905; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-5.

#### **73-7-6. [Report; notice; land in several counties.]**

In case the lands are situated in more than one county the notice published in the county wherein the court having jurisdiction is situated shall contain a description of all the lands in said proposed district, the damages awarded to the several parcels thereof



and amounts assessed for construction against the several parcels thereof, but the notice published in any other county or counties may contain a description of only the lands situate in said county for which said publication is made, together with the damages awarded to and assessments for construction against the several tracts, parcels, easements and interests situate in said county for which publication is made.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 44; Code 1915, § 1920; C.S. 1929, § 40-150; 1941 Comp., § 77-1906; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-6.

### **73-7-7. [Report; notice; personal service.]**

In case of service of said notice personally, or the acceptance and waiver thereof on all the owners of the lands within the district, said service shall be sufficient and give the court jurisdiction without said publication.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 45; Code 1915, § 1921; C.S. 1929, § 40-151; 1941 Comp., § 77-1907; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-7.

### **73-7-8. [Report; how modified.]**

If the court finds that the report requires modification the same may by order of the court be referred back to the commissioners, who may be required to modify it in any respect.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 46; Code 1915, § 1922; C.S. 1929, § 40-152; 1941 Comp., § 77-1908; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-8.

### **73-7-9. [Report; assessments; confirmation; appeal.]**

If there be no remonstrance, or if the finding be in favor of the validity of the proceedings or after the report shall have been modified to conform to the findings, the court shall confirm the report and order of confirmation shall be final and conclusive, the proposed work shall be established and authorized and the proposed assessments approved and confirmed, which approval and confirmation shall be final, unless within thirty days an appeal be taken to the supreme court.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 47; Code 1915, § 1923; C.S. 1929, § 40-153; 1941 Comp., § 77-1909; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-9.

### **73-7-10. [Report; confirmation; modification.]**

Said order of confirmation may, at the same or at any subsequent term of said court, be revised, modified or changed, in whole or in part, on petition of the commissioners, after such notice as the court may require, to parties adversely interested.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 48; Code 1915, § 1924; C.S. 1929, § 40-154; 1941 Comp., § 77-1910; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-10.

### **73-7-11. [Commissioners; supplemental report; amendments.]**

At any time prior to making the order confirming said report or thereafter the court may permit the commissioners to present and file a supplemental report, or amend their report as to any matter which, pursuant to the provisions hereof, was or might have been included in the original report presented by them, and after reasonable notice given to all parties interested, in such manner as the court shall direct, the court may, upon the hearing in said matter make such order as the case may require.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 49; Code 1915, § 1925; C.S. 1929, § 40-155; 1941 Comp., § 77-1911; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-11.

### **73-7-12. [Petition; dismissal; costs.]**

In case the petition or proceedings are dismissed as provided in Section 73-6-39 NMSA 1978, a judgment shall be entered against the petitioners and in favor of the commissioners for the costs, expenses and liabilities incurred in said proceedings, and for the benefit of those who have rendered services or advanced money in the prosecution of said proceedings, or have recovered costs on successful contests therein.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 50; Code 1915, § 1926; C.S. 1929, § 40-156; 1941 Comp., § 77-1912; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-12.

### **73-7-13. [Petitioners; liability of.]**

All petitioners shall, among themselves, contribute in the payment of said judgment, in proportion to the number of acres of land they have within the boundaries of the proposed district.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 51; Code 1915, § 1927; C.S. 1929, § 40-157; 1941 Comp., § 77-1913; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-13.

### **73-7-14. [Assessments; how paid.]**

At the time of confirmation of such assessments, it shall be competent for the court to order the assessments for cost of construction, to be paid in not more than fifteen installments of such amounts and at such times as will be convenient for the accomplishment of the proposed work, or for the payment of the principal and interest of such notes or bonds of said district as the court shall grant authority to issue, for the cost of construction. The court may also, by such order, fix a date on which the first installment of the assessments for cost of construction shall become due, not more than

five years after the date of the order, and each of said installments shall draw interest at the rate of not to exceed eight percent per annum from the date of said order.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 52; Code 1915, § 1928; C.S. 1929, § 40-158; 1941 Comp., § 77-1914; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-14.

### **73-7-15. [Assessments; when payable.]**

Unless otherwise provided by said order, such assessment shall be payable at once; and from the time of the entry of said order, assessments for cost of construction and interest thereon, shall be a lien upon the lands assessed until paid. Any owner of land, or any corporation assessed for cost of construction, may at any time within thirty days after the confirmation of said report, pay into court, the amount of the assessment against his land or any tract thereof, or against any such corporation. Said payment shall relieve said lands from the lien of said assessment, and said corporation from all liability on said assessment.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 53; Code 1915, § 1929; C.S. 1929, § 40-159; 1941 Comp., § 77-1915; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-15.

### **73-7-16. [Assessments for repairs; when payable; commissioners annual report.]**

Assessments for keeping any drain, ditch, levee or other work in repair under these provisions, shall be due and payable on the first Tuesday of September annually. Commissioners having charge of any completed drain, ditch or other work shall, on the first Tuesday of June in each year, file with the clerk of the court having jurisdiction, a report in which they shall specify in detail the labor necessary to the preservation and protection of the work under their control, the places where repairs are specially needed and the sum to be assessed against each tract, lot, easement or corporation to pay all necessary repairs. All such assessments shall be apportioned on the last assessments of benefits confirmed by the court.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 54; Code 1915, § 1930; C.S. 1929, § 40-160; 1941 Comp., § 77-1916; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-16.

### **73-7-17. [Annual assessment.]**

Within thirty days after filing such annual report, at a time and place to be fixed by the court, or presiding judge, the court or presiding judge shall examine said report, hear all objections to the same, fix and determine the amount of such assessments and cause such adjudication to be entered of record in said court, and a certified copy of the same to be delivered to said commissioners.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 55; Code 1915, § 1931; C.S. 1929, § 40-161; 1941 Comp., § 77-1917; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-17.

### **73-7-18. [Commissioners; powers; right of entry on lands.]**

The commissioners from the time of their appointment may go upon the lands lying within said district for the purpose of examining the same, and making plans, plats and surveys, and after the organization of said district, and payment or tender of compensation allowed, may go upon said lands, with their servants, teams, tools, instruments or other equipments [equipment], for the purpose of constructing such proposed work, and may forever thereafter enter upon said lands as aforesaid, for the purpose of maintaining or repairing such proposed work, doing no more damage than the necessity of the occasion may require; and any person or persons, who shall willfully prevent or prohibit any of such persons from entering such lands for the purposes aforesaid, shall be fined any sums not exceeding \$25.00 per day for each day's hindrance to be recovered in an action of debt in favor of such drainage district, which sum shall be paid into the treasury for the use of said district.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 57; Code 1915, § 1933; C.S. 1929, § 40-162; 1941 Comp., § 77-1918; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-18.

### **73-7-19. [Rights-of-way; eminent domain.]**

Where a drainage district has no sufficient outlet within its borders it is hereby provided that said district shall have the right to condemn right-of-way across the necessary lands to reach an outlet, the damages, if any, to the owners of lands through which the right-of-way is procured to be agreed upon by said owner and the commissioners of such district or if they cannot agree upon damages, the said drainage commissioners, shall proceed in the name of such drainage district to condemn such right-of-way which shall be so located so as to do the least damage to private or public property consistent with the proper use and economical construction of such outlet. Such land and right-of-way shall be acquired in the manner provided by law for the condemnation and taking of private property in New Mexico, for railroad, telegraph, telephone and other public uses and purposes.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 58; Code 1915, § 1934; C.S. 1929, § 40-163; 1941 Comp., § 77-1919; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-19.

### **73-7-20. [Drains across railroads; construction.]**

Upon receiving a thirty days' notice from the commissioners in writing, which notice shall be accompanied by the plans and specifications, of the size and character of such ditch or drain, any railway company, over whose right-of-way or yard such drain or ditch shall be laid out, may perform the work of constructing such ditch or drain across its said right-of-way according to such plans or specifications so furnished, and such railway so constructing such ditch or drain shall receive fair compensation therefor to be

allowed by the commissioners of such drainage district and approved by the court; provided, that such railway company may be assessed for benefits derived from such drainage in the same manner and to the same extent as other landowners benefited in the immediate vicinity thereof, are assessed. If such railway company shall fail to commence and proceed with the construction of such ditch or drain as in this section provided, after the notice as herein provided, the commissioners may at any time after the expiration of said thirty days open or cause to be opened such right-of-way or yard along the line of such ditch or drain and construct the same in like manner as such ditch or drain is constructed through the property of individuals, provided, that such construction shall be carried on in such manner as will not interfere with the operation of said railway.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 59; Code 1915, § 1935; C.S. 1929, § 40-164; 1941 Comp., § 77-1920; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-20.

### **73-7-21. [Additional assessments; how made.]**

If in the first assessment for construction the commissioners shall have reported to the court a smaller sum than is needed to complete the work of construction, or if in any year an additional sum is necessary to pay the interest on lawful indebtedness of said drainage district, further or additional assessments on the land and corporations benefited, apportioned upon the last assessment of benefit which has been approved by the court, shall be made by the commissioners of said drainage district under the order of the court or presiding judge thereof without notice, which further or additional assessment may be made payable in installments as specified in Section 73-7-15 NMSA 1978, and shall be treated and collected in the same manner as the original assessments for construction confirmed by the court in said drainage district.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 60; Code 1915, § 1936; C.S. 1929, § 40-165; 1941 Comp., § 77-1921; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-21.

### **73-7-22. [Omissions not jurisdictional.]**

Omission to assess benefits, or to assess for cost of construction, or to make additional assessments, or to make assessment for repairs against, or to award damages to any one or more tracts of land or easements in a drainage district, or to assess benefits, or to assess for cost of construction, or to assess for repairs or to make additional assessments against any corporation which should have been assessed, shall neither affect the jurisdiction of the court to confirm any report nor to render the benefits assessed, or the assessments for cost of construction, or additional assessments or assessments for repairs against other lands, or assessments against any corporation voidable, but the commissioners of said drainage district shall thereafter, as soon as they discover the omission, or receive notice thereof, either agree with the omitted parties upon the proper assessments or damages or make such assessments against the omitted lands and corporations, and award such damages as

shall be just, and report the fact, together with such assessments and awards, to the court.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 61; Code 1915, § 1937; C.S. 1929, § 40-166; 1941 Comp., § 77-1922; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-22.

### **73-7-23. [Assessments; contents of; presumption.]**

Any owner of land, or any interest in land, within a drainage district, who claims that his land in said district is exempt from liability for, or lien of any assessment for cost of construction or repairs, or any additional assessment by said commissioners levied against the same whether said assessments be the first or any subsequent assessment or questions the legality of such assessment, may at any time within thirty days after such assessment shall have been made and on ten days' notice to such drainage commissioners appear before the court having jurisdiction and show cause why said land should not be bound by all drainage assessments in any report or reports of the commissioners of said district assessed against the same. The presumption shall be in favor of the regularity of such assessments, and they shall stand as valid assessments unless the owner of such land, or some interest therein shall show that said assessment is inequitable, or is void because the lands were not subject to assessment in the first instance.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 62; Code 1915, § 1938; C.S. 1929, § 40-167; 1941 Comp., § 77-1923; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-23.

### **73-7-24. [Additional levy to cover void assessments.]**

In the case the court decides that such lands should not, at the time said assessments were made be assessed for drainage purposes, and that said assessment or assessments, are void, the commissioner may levy an additional assessment on all of the assessable land and corporations in said district based on the last assessment of benefits approved by the court, to realize the sum lost to the district by reasons of the void assessment.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 63; Code 1915, § 1939; C.S. 1929, § 40-168; 1941 Comp., § 77-1924; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-24.

### **73-7-25. [Due date of assessments fixed by court order; collection; lien on lands.]**

All drainage assessments and installments thereof with interest thereon heretofore or hereafter confirmed and made payable under and pursuant to the provisions of Sections 73-6-1 to 73-6-17, 73-6-25 to 73-6-44, 73-7-1 to 73-7-24, 73-7-37, 73-7-38, and 73-7-40 to 73-7-56 NMSA 1978, shall be paid at the time and to the official as fixed by the order of the court which confirmed such assessments, and the collection and

enforcement thereof shall be made by the drainage commissioners, their officers, agents and attorneys, but subject to and in accordance with the provisions of this act [73-7-25 to 73-7-35 NMSA 1978]. If such assessments against lands, or any installments thereof, with interest thereon, are not paid within thirty days from the date when due, such assessments shall thereafter bear interest at the rate of one percent per month on the amount then due. All drainage assessments and installments thereof with the interest thereon shall be a lien upon the lands assessed until paid or satisfied under the provisions of this act, and such lien shall not be affected by any sale of said lands for state and county taxes.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 40-401; 1941 Comp., § 77-1925; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-25.

### **73-7-26. [Assessments certified as delinquent entered on tax roll; collection.]**

Drainage commissioners may at any time certify any such delinquent assessments, installments and/or interest to be due and unpaid, indicating the amount of each such assessment, installment and/or interest then due, as to each tract or parcel of land, to the official whose duty it is to collect general state and county taxes, of any county in which any delinquent lands are situated, and such official shall enter the same in the tax roll of such county next thereafter to be made against the lands so certified as delinquent, but in a separate column thereof, and the same shall be collected in the same manner in which state, county and town taxes are collected, except only that personal property, and all lands other than those against which the assessment shall have been made, shall not be liable to seizure and sale therefor; and except further that if any of said lands be not sold at general tax sale for the full amount of all taxes, including drainage assessments, then contained on the tax roll of the county, or if, prior to such general tax sale, the drainage commissioners shall elect to recall their certificate of delinquencies by notice to the county official receiving the same, then and in either such event such lands may be certified back to the drainage commissioners upon their demand as unsold without prejudice to any future action for the collection and enforcement and without prejudice to the lien of such assessments, installments and interest upon said lands by reason thereof.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 40-402; 1941 Comp., § 77-1926; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-26.

### **73-7-27. [Foreclosure proceedings for collection of delinquent assessments.]**

Drainage districts organized under the provisions of Sections 73-6-1 to 73-6-17, 73-6-25 to 73-6-44, 73-7-1 to 73-7-24, 73-7-37, 73-7-38 and 73-7-40 to 73-7-56 NMSA 1978, may enforce the collection of delinquent drainage assessments heretofore or hereafter becoming delinquent as an additional and alternative remedy by proceedings in the district court of the county where the lands upon which the assessments are

delinquent, or some part thereof, are situated, for foreclosure of the lien herein referred to and a sale of the land upon which the assessments or installments thereof and/or interest thereon are delinquent in the manner hereinafter provided.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 40-403; 1941 Comp., § 77-1927; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-27.

### **73-7-28. [Petition in foreclosure proceedings.]**

Such foreclosure proceedings shall be by petition in equity as an action in rem filed by or in the name of the drainage district, and such petition shall aver the nonpayment of assessments or installments thereof and/or interest thereon with a description of the tracts or parcels of land upon which a lien or liens is claimed, the names of the owners and the amount of the delinquencies against the respective lands, indicating the amount of each such assessment, installment and/or interest then due, as to each tract or parcel of land, and shall pray for a judgment against each of said tracts or parcels of land and the foreclosure of the lien against the same by sale thereof. Any number of tracts or parcels of land upon which assessments, installments and/or interest may be claimed as a lien, may be included in the same petition. No error or insufficiency in said petition not going to the justice of the lien sought to be foreclosed shall invalidate the proceedings; and said petition may be amended at any time prior to entering of decree as equity shall require.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 40-404; 1941 Comp., § 77-1928; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-28.

### **73-7-29. [Notice; publication; mailing; form.]**

Upon the filing of said petition, notice of the pendency of such suit in the name of the clerk of the court in which said petition is filed shall be given by publication once a week for four consecutive weeks and by mailing a copy of such notice by registered prepaid postage addressed to each record owner of the lands described in the petition at the last known post-office address of such owner, and the affidavit of the attorney or agent of plaintiff shall be filed in said cause indicating the addresses of the record owners to whom such notice has been so mailed, or that any such address upon diligent inquiry could not be ascertained and is unknown, which affidavit shall be prima facie evidence of the facts therein stated. The last publication shall be not less than 30 days before application for judgment shall be made and said notice shall be given in some newspaper published in the county wherein the lands are situated, and if such lands are in more than one county, then in each of such counties, and may be in substantially the following terms:

" \_\_\_\_\_ Drainage District,

vs.



## Delinquent Lands.

All persons having or claiming an interest in any of the following described lands are hereby notified that suit is pending in the district court of \_\_\_\_\_ to enforce collection of certain drainage assessments on the lands herein described, which lands together with the amounts severally due are as follows, to wit: (Then should follow a list of delinquent lands and the total amounts due thereon respectively as aforesaid, and the names of the respective owners.)

All persons or corporations interested in said lands are hereby notified that they are required by law to appear on or before the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ A.D. \_\_ at the place fixed by law for such court to convene, and make defense to said suit or the same will be taken as confessed and final judgment will be entered directing the sale of said lands for the purpose of collecting said assessments together with the interest and costs allowed by law.

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Clerk of said Court."

Such notice when published and served as aforesaid shall be equivalent to service of summons and shall confer jurisdiction upon the court to hear and determine said cause and to adjudicate the interests of all persons having any right or title in or to the land described therein.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 40-405; 1941 Comp., § 77-1929; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-29.

## **73-7-30. [Trial; equity procedure; costs and fees; time of payment of judgment.]**

The suit shall stand for trial at the day named in such notice or as soon thereafter as the business of the court will permit. Such proceedings shall in all respects be conducted as provided by law for suits in equity and the court shall hear the cause as in other cases and enter its decree in accordance with the law and the practice of courts of equity. In all cases where notice has been properly given as aforesaid and where no answer has been filed, or if filed and the cause shall be decided for the plaintiff upon the hearing thereof, then the court by its decree shall enter judgment against each tract or parcel of land for the amount found due, together with all costs of the proceedings, which shall include a reasonable attorney's fee to be fixed by the court and taxed as a part of the costs, and such costs shall be apportioned among the several tracts or parcels of land which may be involved in one proceeding as the court may deem just and equitable. The court shall further fix a time not less than thirty nor more than ninety days from entry of such decree wherein the amount of such judgment against any such tract or parcel of land may be paid by any party interested and said decree shall provide that upon default of such payment the lien of such assessments shall be foreclosed by a

sale of all lands upon which the judgment has not been paid. The court by its decree shall appoint a special master to carry out the decree, to whom the judgments shall be paid, and who in default of such payment shall advertise and sell such lands as herein provided, and shall fix the compensation of such special master as a part of the costs. The said decree shall be a joint and several decree as to each and all the several tracts or parcels of land against which the same is entered, and shall provide for interest at the rate of one percent per month on the amount found to be due until the date of sale. Provided, however, that no tract or parcel of land included in said decree shall be held liable for more than the amount due as assessed against that particular tract or parcel of land, including costs and interest as hereinbefore provided.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 6; C.S. 1929, § 40-406; 1941 Comp., § 77-1930; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-30.

### **73-7-31. [Sale of lands for delinquent assessments; transfer of title; redemption; commissioners as purchasers; disposition of receipts.]**

The said special master shall sell the lands as to which the judgment entered has not been paid, at the courthouse of the county where the lands or some part thereof are situated, after having first advertised said sale weekly for four consecutive weeks in some newspaper published in such county, and if such lands are situated in more than one county such notice of sale shall be published in a newspaper in each of such counties. If all such land is not sold on the day advertised, such sale shall continue from day to day until completed. Sale shall be made at public outcry to the highest and best bidder for cash. The special master shall make a report of such sale or sales to the court and upon approval thereof, title to such lands so sold shall thereupon become vested in the purchaser, subject, however, to all other tax liens and the lien for all subsequent installments of drainage assessments and interest thereon, and the said purchaser shall thereupon become the owner in fee simple of the lands, and the special master shall execute and deliver deeds which shall have the same force and effect as deeds executed under judgments and decrees in civil actions, but the owner of such land, or anyone interested in the title thereto may redeem from such sale by paying to the purchaser or his assignee the purchase price with interest thereon at the rate of twelve (12%) percent per annum, together with all moneys subsequently paid for taxes and assessments thereon, at any time within nine months from the date of sale. The several tracts or parcels of land to be sold shall be offered separately. At such sale the commissioners of the drainage district in which the lands are situated may bid and become purchasers the same as any other purchaser and shall not be required to pay the purchase price in cash, but shall take title to such lands in the name of the drainage district and may thereafter sell or lease the said lands and all proceeds from the sale or leasing thereof shall be disposed of as herein provided. The amount received upon any bid shall be applied to the amount of the judgment against said tract or parcel of land bid upon; if the amount received is less than such judgment, nevertheless such judgment shall be deemed satisfied by such sale, but if the amount received is more than the judgment any surplus shall be applied first to the payment of any general state

or county taxes outstanding and unpaid and then if a balance remains, as the court shall direct. All moneys received by the special master in payments on the judgment or for purchase of lands at the foreclosure sale over and above costs, attorney's fees and expenses of sale shall be paid to the treasurer of the district for credit pro rata to the respective funds entitled thereto.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 40-407; Laws 1933, ch. 26, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-1931; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-31.

### **73-7-32. [Proceedings brought by bondholders; liability for costs and fees.]**

In case the drainage commissioners shall consent thereto, or shall fail to commence proceedings to foreclose as aforesaid within twelve months after any assessments [assessments], installments and/or interest shall have become delinquent, then the holder of any bond or coupon issued by the drainage district against such assessment which shall have been in default six months shall have the right to bring and thereafter control such suits for the collection of delinquent assessments, installments and/or interest in the name of the drainage district, and for such purpose may recall from the county officers having charge of the same any assessments theretofore certified by the commissioners, and the proceedings in such suit brought by the holder of any such bond or coupon shall in all respects be governed by the provisions herein contained; provided however, that the drainage district shall not be made liable by virtue of such proceedings for any costs or attorney's fees, and no action shall be commenced by the holder of any bond or coupon, without the consent of the commissioners, until thirty days after demand made upon them to institute the same and then only upon leave of the court obtained after such notice to the commissioners as the court shall prescribe.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 40-408; 1941 Comp., § 77-1932; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-32.

### **73-7-33. [Disposition of unsold lands.]**

In any case where the lands are offered for sale, pursuant to such foreclosure proceedings, and there is no bid upon any tract or parcel of land, such unsold lands may be disposed of by the drainage commissioners at public or private sale at such price and upon such terms as the court may direct, subject to the right of redemption as herein provided.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 40-409; 1941 Comp., § 77-1933; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-33.

### **73-7-34. Lands worth less than accumulated taxes and assessments; sale for best obtainable price; redemption; disposition of proceeds.**

If it shall appear at any time that any tract or parcel of land covered by a certificate of sale held by any county acquired by it at general tax sale for taxes and/or drainage assessments cannot be sold for the amount of the accumulated taxes and assessments against the same, an action may be instituted upon petition to the district court by such district to inquire as to the value of such lands, and a copy of such petition shall be served upon the property tax division of the taxation and revenue department and upon the collector and treasurer of the county in which such lands are situated. If it shall appear upon the hearing of such petition that the lands cannot be sold for the amount of all accumulated general taxes and assessments against such lands, then the court shall order such lands sold as the court may direct at public sale after four weeks' notice by publication, for the best price obtainable, free and clear of all such taxes and assessments, but the owner or anyone interested in the title may redeem from such sale as provided in Section 73-7-31 NMSA 1978. The proceeds of such sale shall be divided pro rata between the county treasurer and the treasurer of said district in discharge of such taxes and assessments.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 40-410; 1941 Comp., § 77-1934; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-34; Laws 1977, ch. 249, § 65.

### **73-7-35. [Lands sold at general tax sale; assignment of certificate to district for payment of taxes.]**

Where lands have been heretofore sold at general tax sale for taxes and drainage assessments and the certificate is held by the county, such lands as to drainage assessments thereon shall be certified back to the drainage commissioners upon their demand, together with all penalties and interest accrued thereon, for collection and enforcement of all drainage assessments as provided by this act [73-7-25 to 73-7-35 NMSA 1978], but such certificate shall remain intact as to general taxes; and in cases where lands have been sold to the county as above stated, the district may if it desires pay the general taxes with interest and penalties and shall thereupon be entitled to an assignment of the certificate of sale and at the expiration of the time allowed by law for redemption shall be entitled to deed therefor if unredeemed.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 131, § 11; C.S. 1929, § 40-411; 1941 Comp., § 77-1935; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-35.

### **73-7-36. [Lands eliminated from drainage districts; private sale for best obtainable price; disposition of proceeds.]**

In all cases where lands in such drainage districts have been sold or may hereafter be sold to satisfy delinquent drainage assessments and the interest or penalties thereon as provided by Sections 73-7-25 through 73-7-35 of said statutes [NMSA 1978] and have been bought in [sic] by the drainage districts as provided by Section 73-7-31 of said statutes [NMSA 1978] as amended by Chapter 26 of the Laws of 1933 if such lands are not worth the amount of the assessments accumulated against them, together with delinquent taxes and/or future assessments thereon, and in the opinion of the

commissioners cannot be sold for sufficient to satisfy such sums, upon order of the district court of the county wherein such districts or any part thereof is situated, based upon a petition of the commissioners by and with the consent of the holder or holders of any bonds issued by the district, such lands may be eliminated from the drainage district and all assessments cancelled against the same and they may be sold by the commissioners at private sale for the best price obtainable, and the proceeds derived from such sale shall be divided pro rata between the county treasurer and the treasurer of said drainage districts in discharge of all such taxes and assessments.

**History:** Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 3, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-1936; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-36.

### **73-7-37. Commissioners may borrow money; notes and bonds; sale.**

The commissioners [of the drainage district] may borrow an amount necessary to meet the preliminary expenses authorized by this article, and secure the amount by notes not running beyond one year from their date, and may further borrow money, not exceeding the amount of assessment for cost of construction, additional assessment and assessments for repairs, outstanding at the time of borrowing, for the construction or repair of any work which they are authorized to construct or repair or for the payment of any indebtedness they may have lawfully incurred and may secure the same by notes or bonds not running beyond one year after the last installment of the assessment, on the account of which the money is borrowed, shall fall due. The notes or bonds shall be in such form as the commissioners may determine, and which notes or bonds shall not be held to make the commissioners personally liable, but shall constitute a lien upon the assessments for the repayment of the principal and interest of the notes or bonds. The bonds shall not be subject to taxation by the state or any subdivision thereof. All sales are to be approved by the [district] court.

In case any money derived from bonds sold to pay for the original construction of improvements, now or hereafter, remains on hand after the work is completed in original construction, and paid for, and not required to pay damages, the residue may be used for maintenance and repair.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 64; Code 1915, § 1940; C.S. 1929, § 40-169; 1941 Comp., § 77-1937; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-37; Laws 1983, ch. 265, § 54.

### **73-7-38. [Refunding indebtedness.]**

And the court may, on the petition of the commissioners authorize them to refund any lawful indebtedness of the district by taking up and cancelling all of its outstanding notes and bonds, as fast as they become due, or before, if the holders thereof will surrender the same, and issuing in lieu thereof new notes, or bonds of such district, payable in such longer time as the court shall deem proper, not to exceed in the aggregate the amount of all notes and bonds of the district then outstanding, and the

unpaid, accrued interest thereon, and bearing interest not exceeding eight percent per annum.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 65; Code 1915, § 1941; C.S. 1929, § 40-170; 1941 Comp., § 77-1938; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-38.

### **73-7-39. [Authority to refund indebtedness of any kind; borrowing money; issuance of new bonds and notes.]**

Drainage districts organized under the provisions of Sections 73-6-1 to 73-6-44, 73-7-1 to 73-7-24, 73-7-37, 73-7-38 and 73-7-40 to 73-7-56 NMSA 1978 may refund all outstanding indebtedness whether evidenced by notes, bonds, coupons, judgments or other evidences of indebtedness in the manner provided by Section 73-7-38 NMSA 1978 of said statutes, and for such purpose may borrow the money necessary from any person or corporation willing to advance the same, or from the reconstruction finance corporation, or under the National Industrial Recovery Act [repealed] or any agency authorized by acts of congress to loan money for such purpose, and may issue new notes or bonds to evidence such indebtedness.

**History:** Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 3, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-1939; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-39.

### **73-7-40. [Letting contracts; bids; notice.]**

In all cases where the estimated cost of the work to be done at any one time under the direction of the commissioners shall exceed five hundred dollars [(\$500)], the same shall be let to the lowest responsible bidder, and the commissioners shall advertise for sealed bids, by notice published in some newspaper published in the county in which the petition is filed, and may advertise in one or more newspapers published elsewhere. If there be no newspaper published in the county in which the petition is filed, they shall advertise in some newspaper of general circulation in the district, which said notice shall particularly set forth the time and place when and where the bids advertised for will be opened, the kind of work to be let and the terms of payment. Said commissioners may continue the letting from time to time, if in their judgment the same shall be necessary, and shall reserve the right to reject any and all bids.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 66; Code 1915, § 1942; C.S. 1929, § 40-171; 1941 Comp., § 77-1940; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-40.

### **73-7-41. [Commissioners not to be interested in contracts.]**

And they shall not during their term of office, be interested directly or indirectly in any contract for the construction of any drain, ditch or other work in such drainage district, or in the sale of materials therefor or in the wages of or supplies for men or teams employed on any such work in said district.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 67; Code 1915, § 1943; C.S. 1929, § 40-172; 1941 Comp., § 77-1941; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-41.

### **73-7-42. [Damages; how paid.]**

The damages allowed to the owners of lands shall be paid or tendered before the commissioners shall be authorized to enter upon such lands, for the construction of any drains or ditches proposed thereon. If the owner is unknown or there shall be a contest in regard to the ownership of the lands, or the owner will not receive payment, or there exists a mortgage or other lien against the same or the commissioners cannot for any other reason pay him, they may deposit the said damages with the clerk of the court, for the benefit of the owner, or parties interested, to be paid or distributed as the court shall direct and such payment shall have the same effect as the tender to and the acceptance of the damages awarded by the true owner of the land. This section shall not, however, prevent said commissioners, their agents, servants and employees [employees] going upon said lands to do any and all work found necessary prior to making their report thereof.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 68; Code 1915, § 1944; C.S. 1929, § 40-173; 1941 Comp., § 77-1942; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-42.

### **73-7-43. [Outside lands; when included.]**

Whenever any lands outside a drainage district are receiving the benefits of the drains of said district, by direct or indirect, natural or artificial connection therewith, or are damaging those in the district, the commissioners of said district may report said facts to the court and ask that said lands, describing them, be brought into said district and assessed for the benefit by them received from the drains or ditches of said district, or damages inflicted.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 69; Code 1915, § 1945; C.S. 1929, § 40-174; 1941 Comp., § 77-1943; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-43.

### **73-7-44. [Outside lands; notice to owners.]**

Upon filing of said report the court shall order the owners of such lands to be notified of the filing of said report and the contents thereof, and shall require such owners to show cause at a time and place fixed therein, not less than twenty days thereafter, why their said lands should not be brought into said district and assessed for said benefit.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 70; Code 1915, § 1946; C.S. 1929, § 40-175; 1941 Comp., § 77-1944; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-44.

### **73-7-45. [Outside lands; remonstrance; hearing.]**

At the time and place fixed for hearing said report any of said landowners may appear and remonstrate against the confirmation of said report. All remonstrances shall be in writing, verified and shall set forth the facts on which they are based. All issues arising on said report shall be tried by the court without a jury.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 71; Code 1915, § 1947; C.S. 1929, § 40-176; 1941 Comp., § 77-1945; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-45.

### **73-7-46. [Outside lands; when annexed.]**

If the court shall find that said lands or any of them are receiving the benefits of any such drain or ditch, the court shall so find in writing and shall order said lands to be annexed to and made a part of said district and benefits to be assessed against the same by the commissioners of said district.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 72; Code 1915, § 1948; C.S. 1929, § 40-177; 1941 Comp., § 77-1946; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-46.

### **73-7-47. [Outside lands; appeal.]**

Said order shall be final and conclusive unless appealed to the supreme court within thirty days from the date of entry thereof.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 73; Code 1915, § 1949; C.S. 1929, § 40-178; 1941 Comp., § 77-1947; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-47.

### **73-7-48. [Annexed lands; assessments.]**

Said commissioners shall, after the time for appeal is passed, assess against each parcel, tract and easement of and in said annexed lands reasonable and just benefits, and shall assess against said lands for construction and repairs such sum as shall be just.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 74; Code 1915, § 1950; C.S. 1929, § 40-179; 1941 Comp., § 77-1948; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-48.

### **73-7-49. [Annexed lands; assessments; notice; hearing.]**

The commissioners shall file their report of such assessments in court. The court shall by order require said owners to show cause at a time and place therein fixed not less than twenty days after service of said order, why said report of assessment should not be confirmed and on such hearing the court shall either amend, confirm or reject such report of assessments.



**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 75; Code 1915, § 1951; C.S. 1929, § 40-180; 1941 Comp., § 77-1949; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-49.

### **73-7-50. [Courts to supervise commissioners; powers.]**

The court shall at all times have supervision of said commissioners, and may at any time require them to make a report on any matter or matters connected with their duties as commissioners, and after due hearing may remove from office any or all of said commissioners for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office or for other good cause. The court may at any time require the commissioners to give new bonds and may fix the amount thereof, and said bonds shall be submitted to the court or the presiding judge thereof for approval.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 76; Code 1915, § 1952; C.S. 1929, § 40-181; 1941 Comp., § 77-1950; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-50.

### **73-7-51. [Bonds and obligations.]**

No bond or other money obligations issued by any drainage district shall be adversely affected by any subsequent change in assessments of benefits.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 77; Code 1915, § 1953; C.S. 1929, § 40-182; 1941 Comp., § 77-1951; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-51.

### **73-7-52. [Commissioners are public officers; presumptions.]**

Commissioners of drainage districts are hereby declared to be public officers. The presumption shall be in favor of the regularity and validity of all their official acts. Whenever any report of the commissioners of any drainage district or any part of said report is contested, remonstrated against or called in question, the burden of proof shall rest upon the contestant, remonstrant or questioner.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 78; Code 1915, § 1954; C.S. 1929, § 40-183; 1941 Comp., § 77-1952; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-52.

### **73-7-53. [Owners of land; rights to use of drains; eminent domain.]**

The owner of any land that has been assessed for the cost of the construction of any ditch, drain or watercourse, as herein provided, shall have the right to use the ditch, drain or watercourse as an outlet for lateral drains from said land; and if said land is separated from the ditch, drain or watercourse by the land of another or others, and the owner thereof shall be unable to agree with said other or others as to the terms and conditions on which he may enter their lands and construct said drain or ditch, and [then] he may acquire a right-of-way therefor by condemnation as hereinafter provided by the provisions of Section 73-7-56 NMSA 1978.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 79; Code 1915, § 1955; C.S. 1929, § 40-184; 1941 Comp., § 77-1953; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-53.

### **73-7-54. [Assessments; confirmation conclusive of regularity.]**

The collection of any assessments made by the commissioners for construction and confirmed by the court, shall not be restrained or obstructed by reason of any omission, imperfection or defect in the organization of any district or in the proceedings occurring prior to the order confirming the assessments of benefits, but such order shall be conclusive as to the regularity of all proceedings relating to the assessments of benefits unless appealed from within thirty days after the entry of such order.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 80; Code 1915, § 1956; C.S. 1929, § 40-185; 1941 Comp., § 77-1954; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-54.

### **73-7-55. [Obstruction of drains; bridges.]**

No person, firm, county or corporation, or other municipal corporation, shall sink, set or drive any post, pillars or piling in any of the drains or ditches constructed under the provisions of this article for the purpose of erecting any bridge, trestle or covering over or across any such drain or ditch. All supports for any such bridges shall be entered or placed on the banks of such drain or watercourse so as not to obstruct the flow of water therein. No person taking water for any purpose, from any drain or ditch, constructed under the provisions of this article, shall take said water in such manner as to obstruct the flow of water in, or in any way diminish the efficiency of, said drain or ditch. Any person who shall violate any of the foregoing provisions of this section or who shall place logs, brush or any other like substances, or fell trees into them, which will obstruct the flow of water in any of the drains or watercourses constructed in whole or in part under the provisions of this article, or in any stream which will flow through such improvement, and any public officer or any employe [employee] who shall fail or refuse to perform any of the duties required by this article, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable for all damages caused thereby.

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 81; Code 1915, § 1957; C.S. 1929, § 40-186; 1941 Comp., § 77-1955; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-55.

### **73-7-56. Rights-of-way; eminent domain by individuals; eminent domain for construction.**

Any person, firm, corporation or association may exercise the right of eminent domain to take and acquire property and [a] right-of-way for the construction, maintenance and operation of a drainage ditch, which shall be located as to do the least damage to private property consistent with its proper use and construction, such property and right-of-way shall be acquired in the manner provided by the Eminent Domain Code [42A-1-1 to 42A-1-33 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 1912, ch. 84, § 82; Code 1915, § 1958; C.S. 1929, § 40-187; 1941 Comp., § 77-1956; 1953 Comp., § 75-20-56; Laws 1981, ch. 125, § 57.

## **ARTICLE 8**

### **Drainage Districts Within Federal Reclamation Projects**

#### **73-8-1. [Organization of districts.]**

Whenever a majority of the resident freeholders owning one-third in area of the lands, or evidence of title to lands so owned, within the limits of any federal reclamation project in the state of New Mexico shall desire to provide for the drainage of such lands or of any portion thereof, they may propose the organization of a drainage district under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978].

Such drainage districts may be formed in order to cooperate with the United States government in effecting and carrying out the purposes of this act through the construction of drainage works necessary to maintain the irrigability of lands within any such district, or for the purchase, extension, operation or maintenance of constructed works necessary for such purposes or for the assumption as principal or guarantor of indebtedness to the United States on account of the drainage of such district lands.

Districts so organized shall be empowered to take any and all action necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 40-201; 1941 Comp., § 77-2001; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-1.

#### **73-8-2. [Petition; filing; contents; publication of notice.]**

For the purpose of establishing a drainage district under this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] a petition shall be filed with the board of county commissioners of the county wherein is embraced the largest acreage of the proposed district; such petition shall state the purposes of the proposed organization, shall contain a general description of the boundaries of the proposed drainage district, the name proposed for such district, and shall designate a committee composed of three of the petitioners to present such petition to such board of county commissioners, shall contain a prayer that said board shall define and establish the boundaries of the proposed drainage district and submit the question of the organization of same to a vote of the qualified electors resident within the proposed district; such petition shall be signed by a majority of the resident freeholders within the proposed district, who shall be the owners in the aggregate of one-third of the total area of lands within the proposed district belonging to the resident freeholders within such district.

Notice of the filing of such petition with the board of county commissioners shall be published once each week for four successive weeks in some newspaper of general circulation printed and published in each county wherein shall be situate any lands proposed to be embraced in any such district, which notice shall set forth the substance of such petition and the time and place when the same will be acted upon by said board of county commissioners, which time may be at any regular meeting or at any special meeting of such board called for such purpose.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 40-202; 1941 Comp., § 77-2002; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-2.

### **73-8-3. [Publications; language; time and manner.]**

The publication required by the preceding section [73-8-2 NMSA 1978] and all publications required by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] shall be made in both English and Spanish and in every instance the last publication shall be made not less than three days before the time fixed by such publications for the taking of action therein mentioned; and all publications shall be made for the time and in the manner prescribed in said preceding section.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 40-203; 1941 Comp., § 77-2003; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-3.

### **73-8-4. [Hearings; boundaries; election divisions; mandamus.]**

Upon the hearing had by the board of county commissioners upon such petition pursuant to the publication of notice thereof as aforesaid, if it shall appear to the board that notice of hearing upon such petition has been published as herein required, that the petition has been signed by the requisite number of petitioners owning the prescribed acreage of lands within the district as designated by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], the commissioners shall then proceed to fix, establish and define the boundaries of the proposed drainage district. The board may adjourn such hearing from time to time, not exceeding three weeks in all, and shall by final order duly entered fix, establish and define the boundaries of such proposed drainage district as finally determined: provided, the board shall not modify the boundaries proposed in the petition so as to change the objects of such petition, or so as to exempt from the operation of this act any land within the proposed boundaries susceptible of being drained by the same system of drainage applicable to other lands in such proposed drainage district; nor shall any land which will not in the judgment of the board be benefited by such proposed drainage system, be included in such drainage district if the owner thereof shall make application at such hearing for the exemption of such land; and provided, further, that contiguous lands not included in the proposed drainage district as described in the petition may, upon application by the owner or owners thereof, be included in such district upon such hearing.

When the boundaries of any such proposed drainage district shall have been determined as aforesaid the board of county commissioners shall forthwith make and enter an order allowing the prayer of the petition, fixing, establishing and defining the boundaries of the proposed district as aforesaid, and designating the name of such proposed district; such order shall call an election of the qualified electors of said proposed district to be held for the purpose of determining whether such proposed district shall be organized under the provisions of this act and in such order shall submit the names of one or more persons from each of the divisions of said proposed district as hereinafter provided, to be voted for as directors therein; and for the purpose of such election shall divide said proposed district into divisions, in number as hereinafter designated, as nearly equal in size as may be practicable, and shall provide that one qualified elector resident within each of said divisions shall be elected as a member of the board of directors of said proposed district by the qualified electors of the whole district.

Each of such divisions shall constitute an election precinct and three judges shall be appointed for each of such precincts, one of whom shall act as clerk of said election. At the first election herein provided for such judges shall be appointed by the board of county commissioners and for all succeeding elections provided for under this act such judges shall be appointed by the board of directors of said district. All such judges shall be qualified electors under the provisions of this act.

Provided, that upon the hearing of the aforesaid petition the board of county commissioners shall disregard any informality therein, and in case they deny same or dismiss it because of noncompliance with any of the provisions of this act, which shall be the only reasons authorizing such refusal or dismissal, the board shall state in writing and in detail the reasons for such action, which shall be entered in full upon the minutes of the board; and in case such reasons are not well founded a writ of mandamus shall, upon proper application, issue out of the district court of the county where such petition is presented compelling the board to act in compliance with this act. Such writ shall be heard within not less than five nor more than twenty days from the date of its issuance.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 40-204; 1941 Comp., § 77-2004; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-4.

### **73-8-5. [District officers.]**

The officers of any such district shall consist of the directors, a secretary and a treasurer. A member of the board of directors shall be elected by such board as president.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 40-205; 1941 Comp., § 77-2005; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-5.

### **73-8-6. [Number of directors and election divisions.]**

The directors and divisions of drainage districts under this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] shall be in number, for districts having an area of twenty-five thousand acres or less, 3; for districts having an area of more than twenty-five thousand acres and less than fifty thousand acres, 5; for districts having an area of more than fifty thousand acres and less than seventy-five thousand acres, 7; and for districts having an area of seventy-five thousand acres or more, 9.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 6; C.S. 1929, § 40-206; 1941 Comp., § 77-2006; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-6.

### **73-8-7. [Notice of election; publication.]**

Upon entry of the orders aforesaid the board of county commissioners shall thereupon cause to be published as by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] provided, a notice embodying the substance of such orders, fixing the time and place for such election and setting forth the matters to be submitted to a vote of the electors, which notice shall be signed by the chairman of such board and attested by the county clerk.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 40-207; 1941 Comp., § 77-2007; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-7.

### **73-8-8. [Conduct of elections.]**

At such election and at all elections held under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] all resident freeholders who are the owners of land within the proposed drainage district, or of evidence of title to such lands, who are qualified electors under the general election laws of the state, shall be entitled to vote and none others. Insofar as applicable the general election laws of the state, except requirements for registration, and except as in this act otherwise provided, shall govern all elections under this act.

The ballots to be used and cast at the election held for the purpose of voting upon the question of the formation of such proposed district shall be substantially in the following form: "Drainage District .. Yes" and "Drainage District .. No," or words equivalent thereto; each qualified elector may vote for one director from each division, and shall indicate his vote by placing a marginal cross upon the ballot for or against any question submitted or name voted upon, and opposite thereto, at any election held under this act. At the election for the formation of any such drainage district and at any subsequent election for directors at which other questions shall be simultaneously submitted, separate ballots for the election of directors shall be used. In such event such separate ballots for the election of directors shall be substantially as follows:

"FOR DIRECTORS FOR \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT"

(inserting name of district.)

"For Director from Division No. 1,

\_\_\_\_\_ "

(the name of the person voted for to be

inserted by the voter.)

"For Director from Division No. 2,

\_\_\_\_\_ "

(the name of the person voted for to be

inserted by the voter.)

and serially thereafter to the number of directors to be chosen.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 40-208; 1941 Comp., § 77-2008; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-8.

### **73-8-9. [Majority and plurality.]**

At all elections held under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] if a majority of all the votes cast by the qualified electors shall be in the affirmative upon any proposition submitted to a vote, other than the election of directors, such proposition shall be declared to be carried, and at all elections for directors the persons receiving the highest number of votes cast by the qualified electors of the district shall be declared to be elected.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 40-209; 1941 Comp., § 77-2009; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-9.

### **73-8-10. [Providing ballots.]**

For the first election to be held under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] requisite ballots shall be provided under the direction of the board of county commissioners; and at all elections subsequent to the organization of any such district all such ballots shall be provided by the district.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 40-210; 1941 Comp., § 77-2010; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-10.

### **73-8-11. ["Resident freeholder" defined.]**

Any person residing within any county in which any portion of a drainage district or proposed drainage district shall lie, and who is the owner of agricultural land within the limits of the district shall, for the purposes of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], be considered a resident freeholder.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 11; C.S. 1929, § 40-211; 1941 Comp., § 77-2011; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-11.

### **73-8-12. [Canvass of votes of first election; order.]**

On the second Monday next succeeding the first election [election] provided for by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], the board of county commissioners shall meet and proceed to canvass the votes cast at such election and declare the result as by this act provided.

If it shall appear that the proposition for the formation of the proposed district has received a majority of the votes cast as hereinbefore provided, said board shall by an order entered upon its minutes declare the proposed drainage district, under the name and style theretofore designated, as having been duly created, established and organized, and in said order shall set forth the names of the persons found to have been duly elected directors as aforesaid. The board shall cause a copy of such order, together with a plat of said district, duly certified by the county clerk, to be immediately filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which any portion of such lands shall be situate; and no board of county commissioners of any county wherein shall be included any portion of such district shall, after the date of the organization of such district, allow another district to be formed including any of the lands of such district without the consent of the board of directors thereof; and from and after the date of such filing the organization of such district shall be deemed to be complete, and the officers so as aforesaid elected shall immediately enter upon the discharge of the duties of their respective offices upon qualifying in accordance with law and shall hold such offices respectively until their successors are elected and qualified.

For the purpose of the first election hereinbefore provided for, if in the judgment of the board of county commissioners it is necessary so to do, such board may establish election precincts and polling places in addition to the number hereinbefore prescribed, and define the boundaries thereof, and such precincts may thereafter be changed by the board of directors of such district. In event of additional election precincts and polling places being designated as aforesaid, judges of election for each such precinct shall be appointed, one of whom shall act as clerk of election.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 12; C.S. 1929, § 40-212; 1941 Comp., § 77-2012; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-12.

### **73-8-13. [Biennial election date.]**



Regular elections of any such district shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of December of each second calendar year following the first election hereinbefore provided for.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 13; C.S. 1929, § 40-213; 1941 Comp., § 77-2013; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-13.

### **73-8-14. [Official oaths.]**

Within ten days after receiving the certificates of election all officers shall take and subscribe the official oath and file the same in the office of the county clerk of the county wherein the organization was effected and immediately thereafter shall assume the duties of their respective offices.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 14; C.S. 1929, § 40-214; 1941 Comp., § 77-2014; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-14.

### **73-8-15. [Directors' offices; conduct of elections after organization.]**

The offices of the board of directors shall be located in the county where the organization is effected.

Fifteen days prior to any election held under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], subsequent to the organization of the district the secretary of such district shall cause to be posted in three public places in each precinct notices setting forth the time and place of holding the election and shall also post a general notice of the same in the office of the board. Prior to the time for the posting of such notices the board shall name from the qualified electors of each precinct three judges, one of whom shall act as clerk, who shall constitute a board of election for each such precinct. Should the board fail to name election judges as aforesaid, or should the persons appointed by the board of directors or any thereof fail to attend at the opening of the polls on the morning of the day fixed for any election, the qualified electors of the precinct present at the hour fixed for the opening of the polls may elect person [persons] qualified as aforesaid to act in the place of any absent member of any such board. In its order calling any election the board shall designate the hour and the place of each precinct where the election shall be held.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 15; C.S. 1929, § 40-215; 1941 Comp., § 77-2015; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-15.

### **73-8-16. [Chairman of election board; oath of judges; voting hours; certification of returns.]**

One of the judges shall be chairman of the election board. Before entering upon the discharge of their duties election judges shall take an oath for the faithful performance

of their duties as such in the manner prescribed by the general election laws of the state.

The polls shall be opened at nine o'clock in the morning of the day fixed for any such election and shall be kept open until six o'clock p.m. of the same day. Immediately following the closing of the polls the clerk of the board of election shall forthwith transmit the returns duly certified by the election judges to the secretary of the board of directors of the district.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 16; C.S. 1929, § 40-216; 1941 Comp., § 77-2016; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-16.

### **73-8-17. [Canvass of returns after organization.]**

On the first Monday after any election other than the first election herein provided for, the board of directors shall meet at the office of the district and canvass the returns. If at such time it shall appear that returns from any precinct have not been received the canvass shall be postponed from day to day until same have been received or until six postponements have been had. The canvass shall be made publicly and the result thereof shall be formally declared by the board of directors and entered upon its minutes.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 17; C.S. 1929, § 40-217; 1941 Comp., § 77-2017; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-17.

### **73-8-18. [Statement of election results; filing; content; certificates of election; filling board vacancies.]**

As soon as the result of any election has been declared the secretary of the board of directors shall prepare and file with the county clerk of the county in which the office of the district is located a statement showing: first, a copy of the publication notice of the election; second, the names of the judges of election; third, the total number of votes cast in the district and in each precinct thereof; fourth, the names of the persons voted for; fifth, the number of votes cast in each precinct for each of such persons; sixth, the names of the persons declared elected; seventh, the number of votes cast in each precinct for and against any question submitted to a vote other than the election of directors; eighth, the declared result of the vote upon any such question.

The secretary shall immediately execute and deliver to each elected director a certificate of election signed by such secretary and authenticated with the seal of the board.

In case of a vacancy in the board of directors by death, removal or inability from any cause properly to discharge the duties of the office, such vacancy shall be filled by appointment made by the remaining members of the board, and upon their failure to make such appointment within thirty days after such vacancy occurs then upon petition

by five qualified electors of said district, the board of county commissioners of the county wherein the office of the board is situate shall fill any such vacancy. Any director appointed as above provided shall hold his office until the next general election of such district and until his successor is elected and qualified.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 18; C.S. 1929, § 40-218; 1941 Comp., § 77-2018; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-18.

### **73-8-19. [Duties of directors; contracts with United States; deposit of bonds; contract assessments.]**

The directors, having duly qualified, shall organize the board by the election of a president as hereinbefore provided and shall appoint a secretary. The board shall also adopt a seal and shall manage and conduct the affairs and business of the district, make and execute all necessary contracts, employ such agents, attorneys, officers and employees as may be required, and prescribe their duties; and shall establish bylaws, rules and regulations for the government of the affairs of the district and for the management, control, operation and maintenance of the system; and such board shall generally perform all such acts as shall be necessary fully to carry out the purposes of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978].

Said board may also enter into any obligation or contract with the United States for the construction, operation and maintenance of drainage works, and for the purpose of fully carrying into effect the purposes of this act, including drainage of district lands, or for the assumption as principal or guarantor of indebtedness to the United States on account of the drainage of district lands.

In case contract shall be made with the United States as herein provided, bonds of the district may be deposited with the United States at ninety-five percent of their par value, to the amount to be paid by the district to the United States under any such contract, the interest on such bonds not to exceed six percent per annum and such interest to be provided for by assessment and levy and regularly paid to the United States to be applied as provided for in such contract. If bonds of the district are not so deposited, it shall be the duty of the board of directors to include as part of any levy or assessment provided for by law, an amount sufficient to meet each year all payments accruing under the terms of any such contract.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 19; C.S. 1929, § 40-219; 1941 Comp., § 77-2019; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-19.

### **73-8-20. [Meetings of directors; records; inspection by elector or federal agent; entry on lands; eminent domain.]**

The directors shall hold quarterly meetings on the first Tuesday in January, April, July and October, and such special meetings as may be required for the proper transaction of the business. Calls for special meetings shall be made by the president or

a majority of the directors. Meetings of the board shall be public and a majority of the board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. All records of the board shall be open to inspection by any qualified elector during business hours. Such boards [board] of directors or the secretary thereof shall at any time allow any officer or agent of the United States, when acting under the order of the secretary of the interior, to have access to all books, records and vouchers of the district which are in the possession or under the control of the secretary or of the board.

The board, its agents and employees, shall have the right to enter upon any land in the district and make surveys and to locate any canals or open or close drainage conduits. The board shall also have the right to acquire by purchase or condemnation all lands, rights-of-way, franchises, canals, ditches and other water conduits or other property necessary for the use of the district or for the construction, use, maintenance, repair or improvement of its canals, ditches or other conduits or drainage works or for the enlargement or extension thereof.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 20; C.S. 1929, § 40-220; 1941 Comp., § 77-2020; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-20.

### **73-8-21. [Title and management of property.]**

The title to all property acquired under the provisions of this chapter [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] shall immediately and by operation of law vest in such drainage district, in its corporate name, and shall be held by such district in trust for, and is hereby dedicated and set apart for the uses and purposes set forth in this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] and shall be exempt from all taxation; and said board is authorized and empowered to hold, use, acquire, manage, occupy and possess said property as herein provided: provided, further, that any property acquired by the district may be conveyed to the United States insofar as the same may be needed for the construction, operation and maintenance of works by the United States for the benefit of the district under any contract that may be entered into by the United States pursuant to this act.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 21; C.S. 1929, § 40-221; 1941 Comp., § 77-2021; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-21.

### **73-8-22. [Powers of board; judicial notice of district organization.]**

Said board shall be authorized to make conveyances or assurances for all property acquired by it under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] in the name of the district to and for the purposes herein expressed, to institute and maintain all actions and proceedings or suits at law or in equity necessary or proper for fully carrying out the provisions of this act or to enforce, maintain, protect or preserve any or all rights, privileges and immunities created by this act or acquired in pursuance hereof. In all courts, actions, suits or proceedings, the board may sue, appear or defend in person or by attorneys and in the name of the district. Judicial notice shall be taken in all actions, suits and judicial proceedings in any court of this state of the organization and

existence of any drainage district of this state organized hereunder, from and after the filing in the office of the county clerk of a copy of the order by the board of county commissioners as hereinbefore provided for; and a certified copy of such order shall be prima facie evidence of the regularity and legal sufficiency of all acts, matters and proceedings therein recited and set forth; and any such drainage district the legality or regularity of the formation or organization whereof shall not be questioned by proceedings in quo warranto within one year from the date of the filing of such copy of such order, shall be conclusively deemed to be a legally and regularly organized and established and existing drainage district within the meaning of this act and its due and lawful formation and organization shall not thereafter be questioned in any action, suit or proceeding, whether brought under the provisions of this act or otherwise.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 22; C.S. 1929, § 40-222; 1941 Comp., § 77-2022; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-22.

### **73-8-23. [Elections on bond issues and federal contracts; conduct; terms of bonds.]**

For the purpose of constructing or purchasing or otherwise acquiring necessary rights-of-way, franchises, canals, ditches and other water conduits, or other property necessary for the use of the district, or for the maintenance, repair or improvement of its canals, ditches or other conduits or drainage works, or for the enlargement or extension thereof, or for the assumption of indebtedness to the United States for drainage district lands, or for the purpose of paying the first year's interest, if any, upon bonds, if any shall be issued, for and under the purposes of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] as herein authorized, and otherwise carrying out the provisions of this act, the board of directors of any such district shall, as soon after such district has been organized as may be practicable, estimate and determine the amount of money necessary to be raised, or amount of indebtedness necessary to be assumed for such purposes, and shall forthwith call a special election, under and in accordance with the provisions of this act, at which election there shall be submitted in the manner by this act prescribed, the question of whether or not bonds of the district shall be issued in the amount determined upon to be necessary, if any, for deposit with the United States, in connection with contract to be entered into with the United States, or whether or not contract shall be entered into with the United States, with or without the deposit of bonds as aforesaid, as herein provided or any other of the questions for the purposes aforesaid. Notice of such election shall be given as hereinbefore specified, and shall clearly set forth the question or questions to be voted upon, the amount of bonds, if any, proposed to be issued for the purpose aforesaid, or the amount of indebtedness proposed to be assumed for the purposes aforesaid and the substance of any contract proposed to be entered into with the United States as aforesaid. Such election and all similar elections which may be held under the provisions of this act, shall be held and the result thereof determined and declared as nearly as possible in conformity with the provisions of this act. No informalities in conducting such election shall invalidate same, if the election shall have been fairly conducted.

At the first election provided for in this section the ballots shall contain the words "Bonds - Yes" and "Bonds - No," or "Contract - Yes" and "Contract - No," or appropriate words equivalent thereto, or descriptive of the question to be voted upon. The same rule shall be followed at any other elections which may be held under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] at which similar questions are submitted to a vote.

If any such election shall carry in conformity with the provisions of this act in favor of the issuance of bonds for the purposes of this act or for the assumption of the indebtedness to the United States for drainage district lands, or in favor of contract being entered into with the United States as herein provided, the directors shall immediately cause to be issued bonds as authorized by such election, or contract to be entered into with the United States as aforesaid. If bonds are not to be deposited with the United States in connection with such contract, bonds need not be issued.

Bonds, the issuance of which is authorized by the provisions of this act for deposit with the United States may be of such denominations, may call for the repayment of the principal at such times as may be agreed upon between the board and the secretary of the interior, and provide for the payment of such rate of interest not exceeding six percent per annum as may be agreed upon by said parties; and where contract is made and bonds are not deposited with the United States in connection therewith, the contract may call for the repayment of principal at such times as may be agreed upon by such parties. Such bonds, if issued, shall be numbered consecutively as issued, and shall bear date of the time of their issue. Coupons for the interest shall be attached to each bond, bearing the lithographed signature of the president and the secretary. Such bonds shall express upon their face that they are issued by authority of this act, stating its title, and date of approval.

The secretary of the district shall keep a record of all bonds deposited as aforesaid, showing their number, date of issue, the date when same are deposited with the United States and the rate of interest required to be paid thereon.

If contract is proposed to be made with the United States in connection with which bonds are not to be deposited with the United States, the question to be submitted to the voters at such special election shall be whether contract shall be entered into with the United States. In such event the notice of election shall include a statement as to the maximum amount of money payable to the United States for construction purposes, exclusive of penalties and interest.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 23; C.S. 1929, § 40-223; 1941 Comp., § 77-2023; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-23.

### **73-8-24. [Assessments for bond interest and installments.]**

Should such bonds be issued under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] for the purposes herein expressed, the same and the interest thereon, and all payments due or to become due the ensuing year to the United States under any

contract between the district and the United States, accompanying which bonds of the district have not been deposited with the United States as aforesaid, shall be paid by revenue derived from an annual assessment upon the real property of the district, and such real property shall be and remain liable to be assessed for such payments as herein provided.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 24; C.S. 1929, § 40-224; 1941 Comp., § 77-2024; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-24.

### **73-8-25. [Drainage works constructed by United States; determining benefits and damages; annual assessment.]**

If any drainage district shall contract with the United States for the construction of drainage works, it shall be within the powers and the duties of the board of directors on or before September 1st next preceding the initial payment for such works under contract with the United States, to fix and determine the rate or percentage of the benefits from the proposed works for all real property within the district to be affected by said works, subject to judicial confirmation as by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] hereinafter provided. The board shall also assess the damages inflicted upon any real property by any such works of the district, and such amount shall be deducted from the assessments payable by each owner of the lands damaged, until compensation for the damages shall have been fully made. If the damage shall be found to exceed the benefits as regards any parcel of real property or any easement, a cash award of the difference shall be made. In thus fixing and determining the rate or percentage of benefits and assessing damages as aforesaid, such board shall determine the amount of money required to meet all obligations and all maintenance, operating and current expenses of the district during the ensuing year for properly carrying out the purposes of this act, all of which shall be taken into consideration in determining the rate or percentage of benefits and assessing damages as aforesaid; and the amount necessary for all of the aforesaid purposes shall thereafter be ascertained and determined by such board in like manner on or before September 1st of each year. The said rate of benefits shall be subsequently used as the basis for annual assessment; but such rate may be changed from time to time by the board of directors as new or changing conditions may, in their judgment, require, subject to judicial confirmation as aforesaid. Drainage districts organized under this act may assess realty within the district boundaries owned by all classes of persons and corporations, to the same extent as now permitted by the laws of this state to drainage districts.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 25; C.S. 1929, § 40-225; 1941 Comp., § 77-2025; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-25.

### **73-8-26. [Certification of amounts to be assessed.]**

On or before September 1st of each year the board of directors of any such district shall certify to the board of county commissioners of the county in which the office of such district is located, the aggregate amount of money required for the purposes

aforesaid; the amount required for the payment of interest upon bonds which may be issued for deposit with the United States and to meet payments required to be made under any contract with the United States, and the amount required for all other purposes under this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], shall be separately set forth; and the aforesaid certificate shall specify the assessments which are to become due for such purposes upon each tract of land within the district subject thereto. Provided, such lands as during any given year, shall not be subject to charges under the contract with the United States, shall not be assessed during any such year for the purposes of repayment to the United States under any such contract. And provided further, district lands shall be exempted from taxation, for the purposes of repayment to the United States, in any year when, and to the extent that, on account of seepage or other conditions, the district shall be exempted from repayment to the United States for such lands under any such contract as aforesaid.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 26; C.S. 1929, § 40-226; 1941 Comp., § 77-2026; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-26.

### **73-8-27. [Duties of county assessor relating to district.]**

It shall be the duty of the county assessor of any county embracing the whole or a part of any drainage district, to assess and enter upon his tax roll each year, the names of the owners, together with a description showing the area of each tract of land in any such district of his county, subject to taxation under this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978]. Each such assessor shall deliver to the board of county commissioners of his county a certified list of all such entries containing the information aforesaid, and the assessor of any county in which shall be situated lands within the district other than the county wherein is located the office of the district, shall transmit to the county commissioners of the county wherein the office of such district is located a duplicate certified list of the aforesaid lands within his county. Upon receipt by each such assessor of notice from the county commissioners of the levies required to be made by the provisions of this act, he shall extend such levies upon his tax roll, to be collected in the same manner as other taxes.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 27; C.S. 1929, § 40-227; 1941 Comp., § 77-2027; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-27.

### **73-8-28. [Assessment rates to be fixed by commissioners of county where district office is located.]**

Immediately upon receipt of the aforesaid certified list of lands in the district subject to taxation hereunder, and of the aforesaid certificate from the board of directors of the district showing the total amount of money necessary for the purposes aforesaid and the several assessments as aforesaid, the board of county commissioners of the county wherein is located the office of any such drainage district, shall separately determine and fix the rate per acre necessary to provide the funds requisite to meet interest upon bonds, if any, deposited under this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], and payments



required to be made under contract with the United States, and also the rate per acre necessary to provide any and all other funds required for the purposes of this act, which rates may be increased fifteen percent to cover delinquencies; and the aggregate of the amounts required for the aforesaid purposes shall be raised by levy of taxes upon lands within the district upon the basis of the rate or percentage of benefits so as aforesaid ascertained, fixed and determined by the board of directors of the district as judicially confirmed and modified. Thereupon such board of county commissioners shall certify to the board of county commissioners of each county embracing any portion of the district, other than the county in which the office of the district is located, the rates per acre so as aforesaid determined and fixed. The board of county commissioners of each county within which shall be located any part of any drainage district shall, at the time of making levies for county purposes, make a levy as, and upon the basis, hereinbefore provided, upon all lands of the drainage district within their respective counties subject to taxation under this act, and shall deliver a notice thereof to the county assessor. All taxes thus levied shall be considered special taxes.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 28; C.S. 1929, § 40-228; 1941 Comp., § 77-2028; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-28.

### **73-8-29. [Ex-officio district treasurer; functions; duties of treasurers of counties within district.]**

The county treasurer of the county in which is located the office of any such district, shall be and is hereby constituted ex-officio district treasurer of such district, and such county treasurer shall be liable upon his official bond, and to indictment and criminal prosecution for malfeasance, or misfeasance or failure to perform any duty herein prescribed as county treasurer or district treasurer as is provided by law in other cases as county treasurer. Such treasurer shall receive and receipt for all monies belonging to the district. It shall be the duty of the county treasurer of each county in which any drainage district is located in whole or in part, to collect and receipt for all taxes levied as herein provided, in the same manner and at the same time as is required in the receipt for and collection of taxes upon real estate for county purposes. The county treasurer of each county wherein shall be situate a portion of any such drainage district, other than the county treasurer of the county in which the office of such district is located, on the first Monday of each month shall remit to the aforesaid district treasurer all monies theretofore collected or received by him on account of such district. Every county treasurer shall keep a bond fund account and a United States contract fund account, and also a general fund account. The bond fund account shall consist of all monies received on account of interest or principal of bonds issued by such district, interest and principal to be separately entered; the United States contract fund account shall consist of all monies received to meet payments due or to become due to the United States under any contract between the district and the United States; the general fund account shall consist of all other monies received.

The district treasurer aforesaid shall pay out of such bond fund account, when due, the interest and principal of the bonds of the district at the time and place specified in

such bonds; he shall also pay out of the contract fund account all payments due to the United States under any contract between the district and the United States at the time, place and in the manner provided for in such contracts. Funds arising from assessment and levy in any year and accruing to the bond fund account and the aforesaid contract fund account, shall respectively be devoted to the obligations of the district payable from such funds in the order of the priority of the creation of the obligations.

Such district treasurer shall disburse funds from the aforesaid general fund account only upon order signed as herein provided.

On the 15th day of each month the district treasurer shall report to the board of directors of the district the amount of money in his hands to the credit of the aforesaid respective funds. All such district taxes collected and paid to the county treasurer as aforesaid shall be received by such treasurers in their official capacity, and they shall be responsible for the safekeeping, disbursement and payment thereof, the same as for other monies collected by them as such treasurers. Provided, no such county treasurer shall receive any commission or extra compensation for the collection of such district taxes, nor shall such district treasurer receive any extra compensation for the discharge of his duties as such, but shall be allowed the sum of not to exceed twenty-five dollars [(\$25.00)] per month for extra clerical assistance which may be required on account of such additional duties.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 29; C.S. 1929, § 40-229; 1941 Comp., § 77-2029; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-29.

### **73-8-30. [Application of general revenue laws.]**

The revenue laws of this state for the assessment, levy and collection of taxes on real estate for county purposes, except as herein modified, shall be applicable for the purposes of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] including the enforcement of penalties and forfeitures for delinquent taxes.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 30; C.S. 1929, § 40-230; 1941 Comp., § 77-2030; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-30.

### **73-8-31. [Warrants; restrictions on issuance and payment; register.]**

With the exceptions hereinbefore specified no claims or accounts shall be paid by the district treasurer until the same shall have been approved and allowed by the board of directors of the district, and only upon warrants signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary, which warrants shall show the date when authorized by said board and the purpose for which drawn. No warrant shall be issued or obligation incurred unless the district treasurer has in his hands sufficient funds to pay any such warrant when presented for payment, or unless provision has been made so that such district treasurer will have in his hands funds with which to meet the payment of any such warrant when presented. All claims and accounts against the district shall be

verified, and the secretary of the district is hereby authorized and empowered to administer oaths to parties desiring to verify claims or accounts against the district.

The district treasurer shall keep a register in which he shall enter each warrant presented for payment, showing the date and amount of such warrant, to whom payable, the date of presentation for payment and the date of payment; and all warrants shall be paid in the order of their presentation for payment to the district treasurer.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 31; C.S. 1929, § 40-231; 1941 Comp., § 77-2031; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-31.

### **73-8-32. [Expense levy; power of constructing system; rights-of-way; state land.]**

For the purpose of defraying the expenses incident to the organization of the district and the care, operation, management, repair and improvement of all drainage works and property of the district, including salaries of officers and employes, and all expenses necessarily incident to the conduct of the business of said district, the board of directors may provide for the payment of all such expenses by levy of assessment therefor in the manner hereinbefore specified. The board of directors shall have the power to construct its drainage canals, ditches or other conduits or drainage works across any stream of water, watercourse, street, avenue, highway, railway, canal, ditch or flume which the route of any such drainage works may intersect or cross; and if the owners of any such property so intersected or crossed, or those in control thereof, shall fail to agree with such board of directors upon the amount to be paid for such intersection or crossing, or as to the points or manner of such crossings, the controversy shall be determined in all respects in accordance with the provisions of law relative to the taking of lands for public uses.

Right-of-way is hereby given, dedicated and set apart to locate, construct and maintain any such drainage works over, through or upon any of the lands which are now or hereafter may be the property of the state.

Lands belonging to the state embraced within the limits of any such drainage district shall in all other respects be subject to the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978]; and the officers of the state who are authorized to administer the laws of the state with reference to state lands, and to disburse funds derived therefrom, are hereby authorized and empowered to take such action and make such disbursements from such funds as shall from time to time be required in order to comply with the provisions of this act applicable to any such lands embraced within any such drainage district.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 32; C.S. 1929, § 40-232; 1941 Comp., § 77-2032; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-32.

### **73-8-33. [Compensation and expenses of directors and president; offenses; penalty.]**

Members of the board of directors of any such drainage district, other than the president, shall each receive compensation at the rate of two and 50-100 dollars [(\$2.50)] per day while attending meetings of the board, or otherwise necessarily employed in the discharge of their duties, and their actual and necessary traveling expenses incurred while engaged upon official business. The president shall receive as compensation one hundred dollars [(\$100)] per annum for each ten thousand acres of land, or major fraction thereof, included within the drainage district, and his actual and necessary traveling expenses incurred while engaged upon official business.

No director or officer named in this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] shall in any manner be interested directly or indirectly in any contract awarded or to be awarded by the board of directors, or in the profits to be derived therefrom; nor shall he receive any bonus, gratuity or bribe; and for any violation of this provision any such officer upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not exceeding five hundred dollars [(\$500)], or by imprisonment for not less than thirty days nor more than one year or by both such fine and imprisonment; and such conviction shall work a forfeiture of his office.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 33; C.S. 1929, § 40-233; 1941 Comp., § 77-2033; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-33.

### **73-8-34. [Incurrence of unauthorized debt prohibited.]**

The board of directors or other officers of the district shall have no power to incur any debt or liability whatever in excess of the express provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], and any debt or liability so incurred shall be void.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 34; C.S. 1929, § 40-234; 1941 Comp., § 77-2034; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-34.

### **73-8-35. [Changing boundaries; effect.]**

The boundaries of any drainage district organized under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] may be changed in the manner herein prescribed; but such change of boundaries shall not impair or affect the organization of the district, or its right in or to property, or any of its rights or privileges of whatsoever kind or nature, nor shall it affect, impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge, for or upon which it was or might become liable or chargeable had such change of boundaries not been made; provided, if the secretary of the interior shall give his assent to a change in boundaries in writing filed with the board of directors, any lands to the exclusion of which from the district assent shall thus be given shall be discharged from any and all liens in favor of the United States, under any contract which shall have been made with the United States, and any bonds deposited with its agents.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 35; C.S. 1929, § 40-235; 1941 Comp., § 77-2035; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-35.

### **73-8-36. [Petition for inclusion of adjacent land; acknowledgment.]**

The holder or holders of title, or evidence of title, to any body of land adjacent to or situate without the boundaries of any drainage district organized under this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], may file with the board of directors of the district a petition in writing praying that such lands be included in such district. The petition shall describe the tracts or body of land owned by the petitioners in such manner as to identify same, and such petition shall be deemed to give the assent of the petitioners to the inclusion in such district of the lands described in the petition. Such petition shall be acknowledged in the same manner as provided by law for conveyances of land.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 36; C.S. 1929, § 40-236; 1941 Comp., § 77-2036; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-36.

### **73-8-37. [Notice of hearing on petition to include lands; contents; expenses.]**

Upon the filing of such petition the secretary of the district shall cause notice of such filing to be given in the manner provided by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] with reference to other notices required to be published. Such notice shall recite the filing of the petition, the names of the petitioners, a description of the lands involved and the prayer of the petitioners, and shall notify all interested persons to appear at the office of the board of directors at a time to be fixed in the notice, and show cause in writing, if any they have, why the petition should not be granted. The time specified in the notice shall be the regular meeting of the board held next after the expiration of the time fixed for the publication of notices under this act.

The petitioner or petitioners shall advance to the secretary sufficient money to cover the estimated costs of all proceedings under such petition, and until such estimated amount has been advanced no publication shall be made.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 37; C.S. 1929, § 40-237; 1941 Comp., § 77-2037; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-37.

### **73-8-38. [Hearing; procedure; effect.]**

At the time and place fixed in the notice, or at such time or times to which the hearing upon such petition may be adjourned, the board of directors shall proceed to hear the petition and all objections thereto, presented in writing by any person, showing cause as aforesaid, why the petition should not be granted. Failure by any interested person to make such showing of cause in writing shall be deemed and taken as an assent upon his part to the inclusion of such lands in said district.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 38; C.S. 1929, § 40-238; 1941 Comp., § 77-2038; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-38.

### **73-8-39. [Requiring payment of pro rata share of prior costs.]**

The board of directors may require as a condition precedent to the granting of the petition that the petitioners shall severally pay to the district such respective sums, as nearly as the same can be estimated by the board, as the petitioner or petitioners, or his or their grantor or grantors, would have been required to pay to such district as assessment for the payment of his or their pro rata of all bonds and the interest thereon which prior thereto may have been issued by said district, or his or their pro rata share of the cost of construction under any contract between the district and the United States, accompanying which bonds of the district have not been deposited with the United States, as in this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] provided, had such lands been included in such district at the time the same was originally formed, or when such bonds were so issued or when such contract with the United States was made.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 39; C.S. 1929, § 40-239; 1941 Comp., § 77-2039; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-39.

### **73-8-40. [Rejection or acceptance of petition to include lands; orders.]**

If the board of directors shall deem it not to be for the best interests of the district to include thereunder the lands mentioned in the petition, such board shall by order in writing reject the petition; but if the board shall deem it for the best interests of the district to include such lands it may by order so change the boundaries of the district as to include therein the lands mentioned in the petition. If such lands are so included the order shall describe the entire boundaries of the district with such lands so included, and for that purpose the board may cause a survey to be made of such portion of such boundaries as may be deemed necessary.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 40; C.S. 1929, § 40-240; 1941 Comp., § 77-2040; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-40.

### **73-8-41. [Filing certified copy of order including land, with map; effect.]**

Upon the entry of an order granting any such petition as aforesaid, a certified copy thereof and a plat of the district showing such change, certified by the president and secretary, shall be filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which shall be situated any of the lands of the district; and the district shall be and remain a drainage district as fully and to every intent and purpose as if the lands so included within the district as aforesaid, had been included therein at the time of the original organization of the district; and the district as so changed and all the lands

embraced therein shall be liable for all existing obligations and indebtedness of such organized district.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 41; C.S. 1929, § 40-241; 1941 Comp., § 77-2041; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-41.

### **73-8-42. [Recording petition in minutes of board; evidential value.]**

Upon the filing of certified copy of the order, together with plat as aforesaid, the secretary of the district shall record in the minutes of the board the aforesaid petition; and the minutes of the board of directors or a certified copy thereof shall be admissible in evidence with the same force and effect as the original petition.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 42; C.S. 1929, § 40-242; 1941 Comp., § 77-2042; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-42.

### **73-8-43. Powers of fiduciaries.**

A guardian, conservator or personal representative of an estate, under the laws of this state, and who as such guardian, conservator or personal representative is entitled to the possession of lands belonging to the estate which he represents on behalf of his ward or the estate which he represents, upon being thereunto authorized by the proper court may sign and acknowledge the petition in this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] mentioned, and may show cause, as in this act provided, why the boundaries of the district should not be changed.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 43; C.S. 1929, § 40-243; 1941 Comp., § 77-2043; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-43; Laws 1975, ch. 257, § 8-128.

### **73-8-44. [Revising election divisions and precincts after including more land.]**

In case of the inclusion of the land within any district by proceedings under this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], the board of directors shall, at least thirty days prior to the next succeeding general election, make an order redividing such district into divisions as nearly equal in size as may be practicable, being in number as in this act hereinbefore provided, and which shall be numbered consecutively, and one director shall thereafter be elected from each such division, in the manner by this act hereinbefore specified.

For the purposes of election the board of directors shall establish a convenient number of election precincts in said district, and define the boundaries thereof, which precincts may change from time to time as the board may deem necessary.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 44; C.S. 1929, § 40-244; 1941 Comp., § 77-2044; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-44.

### **73-8-45. [Excluding land.]**

Any tract of land included within the boundary of such district at or after its organization under this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], may be excluded therefrom, in the manner herein prescribed; but such exclusion of land from the district shall not impair or affect its organization, or its rights in or to property or any of its rights or privileges of whatever kind or nature, nor shall such exclusion affect, impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge for or upon which it would or might become liable or chargeable, had such land not been excluded from the district.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 45; C.S. 1929, § 40-245; 1941 Comp., § 77-2045; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-45.

### **73-8-46. [Petition for exclusion of land after organization.]**

The owner or owners of title, or evidence of title, to any lands embraced within any drainage district, may file with the board of directors of the district a petition praying that such lands may be excluded from the district. Such petition shall describe the lands desired to be excluded in such manner as to identify the same; and the petition shall be acknowledged in the manner and form as required for conveyances of real estate.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 46; C.S. 1929, § 40-246; 1941 Comp., § 77-2046; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-46.

### **73-8-47. [Publication of notice of hearing on exclusion of land; contents; expenses.]**

Upon the filing of such petition the secretary of the district shall cause notice of such filing to be published in the manner by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] prescribed for the publication of notices. The notices shall set forth the filing of the petition, the names of the petitioner, or petitioners, a description of the lands covered thereby sufficient for the identification thereof and the prayer of the petitioner, and shall notify all interested persons to appear at the office of the district at a time to be named in the notice, and show cause in writing, if any exist, why the petition shall not be granted. The time specified in the notice shall be the regular meeting of the board to be held next after the expiration of the time fixed by this act for the publication of notices. The estimated cost of all proceedings under any such petition shall be advanced by the petitioner or petitioners before the secretary shall publish such notice.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 47; C.S. 1929, § 40-247; 1941 Comp., § 77-2047; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-47.



### **73-8-48. [Hearing on petition for exclusion of land.]**

At the time and place mentioned in the notice, or at the time or times to which hearing upon such petition may be adjourned, the board of directors shall proceed to hear the petition and all objections thereto which are presented in writing, showing cause as aforesaid why the prayer of the petition should not be granted. The filing of such petition as aforesaid shall be deemed and taken as an assent by each and all of the petitioners to the exclusion from the district of the lands mentioned in the petition, or any part thereof.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 48; C.S. 1929, § 40-248; 1941 Comp., § 77-2048; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-48.

### **73-8-49. [Order for denial or approval of exclusion of land.]**

If the board of directors shall deem it not to be for the best interests of the district that the lands mentioned in the petition, or some portion thereof, shall be excluded from the district, it shall order that the said petition be denied; but if such board shall deem it to be for the best interests of the district that such lands, or some portion thereof be excluded from the district, and if the secretary of the interior shall in writing give his assent as by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] hereinbefore provided, then the board may order the lands mentioned in the petition or some portion thereof to be excluded from the district.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 49; C.S. 1929, § 40-249; 1941 Comp., § 77-2049; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-49.

### **73-8-50. [Filing order of exclusion and new plat; effect.]**

Upon the allowance of such petition a certified copy of the order of the board of directors authorizing such change, and a plat of such district showing such change, certified by the president and the secretary of the district, shall be filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which shall be situated any of the lands of the district; and the district shall remain a drainage district as fully to every intent and purpose as if the lands excluded by change of the boundaries as aforesaid had not been excluded therefrom. Provided, in case contract has been made between the district and the United States as in this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] provided, no change shall be made in the boundaries of the district, and the board of directors shall make no order for any such change until the written assent of the secretary of the interior shall have been filed with the board of directors as aforesaid. Upon the filing of such written assent, however, the lands excluded from any such district shall be discharged of and free of liens in favor of the United States under any contract with the United States, or under bonds deposited with its agents.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 50; C.S. 1929, § 40-250; 1941 Comp., § 77-2050; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-50.

### **73-8-51. [Revising election divisions and precincts after exclusion of land.]**

At least thirty days before the next general election of any such district the board of directors thereof may make an order dividing said district into divisions as nearly equal in size as practicable, in number as in this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] hereinbefore specified, and numbered consecutively; one director shall be elected from each such division by the qualified electors of the whole district. For the purpose of election in such district the said board shall establish a convenient number of election precincts and define the boundaries thereof, which precincts may be changed from time to time as the board of directors may deem necessary.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 51; C.S. 1929, § 40-251; 1941 Comp., § 77-2051; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-51.

### **73-8-52. [Dissolution of district; petition; election; restrictions.]**

When a majority of the resident freeholders owning one-third in area of the lands, or evidence of title to lands so owned within the limits of any such drainage district, shall petition the board of directors to call a special election for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of said district a proposition to vote on the dissolution of such drainage district, setting forth in the petition that all bills, claims and obligations of every nature whatsoever have been fully satisfied and paid, and that the necessity for a continuance of such organization no longer exists, it shall be the duty of the board, if satisfied as to the correctness of the showing made by the petition to call an election setting forth its object, and to cause notice thereof to be published in the manner and for the time prescribed by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], designating the time and places for the holding of the election, as by this act required. At such election the ballots used shall bear the words "For dissolution . . . . Yes" and "For dissolution . . . . No," or words equivalent thereto.

Provided, the board of directors shall be without jurisdiction to entertain the petition or to call the election hereinbefore mentioned so long as contract with the United States, by this act authorized, remains in force, without the written consent of the secretary of the interior filed with the county clerk of the county wherein the office of the district is located.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 52; C.S. 1929, § 40-252; 1941 Comp., § 77-2052; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-52.

### **73-8-53. [Canvass of vote; declaration of dissolution; filing.]**

The votes cast at such election shall be canvassed at the time and in the manner prescribed by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] as applied to other elections herein mentioned; and if by such canvass it shall appear that a majority of the ballots cast at such election was in favor of dissolution, then it shall be the duty of the board of

directors to declare the district to be disorganized; and the board shall certify to the county clerk [clerks] of the respective counties in which the district is situated, the number of signatures to the petition, the date when the election was held, the number of votes cast for and against the proposition and the result of the canvass as declared by the board; which certificate shall be signed by the president and secretary of the board, and authenticated by the seal of the district. Such certificate shall be recorded by the county clerks of the respective counties above mentioned.

Should it appear as the result of such canvass that a majority of the votes cast at such election were against dissolution, then the board of directors shall declare the proposition lost, and shall cause the result as thus ascertained and declared, and the vote cast, to be made a part of the records of the district.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 53; C.S. 1929, § 40-253; 1941 Comp., § 77-2053; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-53.

### **73-8-54. [Special actions for validation of proceedings of board.]**

The board of directors of any drainage district organized under the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] shall commence special proceedings in and by which the proceedings of such board, and of any such district, providing for the authorization of contract with the United States, with or without the deposit of bonds, may be judicially examined, approved and confirmed.

Such proceedings shall be brought within sixty days after the adoption of resolution by the board declaring that the bond election or election for the authorization of contract with the United States has been favorably voted upon by the electorate of the district.

The board may, however, in its discretion, institute an action prior to the time specified, whereby the validity of the organization of the district or of any steps leading to the issuance of bonds or to the making of contract as aforesaid, may be separately judicially examined, approved and confirmed.

Within sixty days after the ascertainment of the rate or percentage of drainage benefits, and the award for damages inflicted by drainage works, as in this act provided, the board shall bring a similar special proceeding whereby such assessment and award may be judicially examined, approved and confirmed.

In the event of the inclusion by any drainage district of additional lands, or the exclusion of lands previously within the boundaries of any such district, the board of directors may, if it shall be deemed advisable so to do, institute a special proceeding in like manner and with like effect as herein provided for the confirmation of bonds, whereby the proceedings for such change of boundaries may be judicially examined, approved and confirmed.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 54; C.S. 1929, § 40-254; 1941 Comp., § 77-2054; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-54.

### **73-8-55. [Petition for validation of board proceedings; contents.]**

The board of directors of the drainage district shall file in the district court of the county in which the lands of the district, or some portion thereof, are situated, a petition in effect praying that the proceedings aforesaid may be examined, approved and confirmed by the court. Such petition shall set forth the proceedings had for the issuance and deposit of bonds or for the authorization of contract with the United States, or for the determination of the rate of drainage benefits thereunder or for the ascertainment and assessment of damage to district lands under drainage works, as the case may be, shall allege generally that the drainage district was duly organized, and its first board of directors duly elected, but need not set forth facts showing such organization or election of the first board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 55; C.S. 1929, § 40-255; 1941 Comp., § 77-2055; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-55.

### **73-8-56. [Hearing on petition for validation of board proceedings.]**

The court shall fix the time for hearing upon said petition, shall order the clerk of the court to publish notice of the filing of such petition, which shall be published for the time and in the manner hereinbefore provided with reference to all notices required to be published under this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978]. The notice shall designate the time and place fixed for hearing upon the petition, shall embody the substance of the prayer of the petition and shall notify any and all persons interested in the organization of the district, or in the proceedings for the issuance or deposit of the bonds or in any such other proceedings as may be in question on or before the date fixed for such hearing, to appear, demur or answer the petition. Such petition may be referred to and described in the notice as "The petition of the Board of Directors of . . . . . Drainage District" (giving its name), praying that the proceedings for the issuance and deposit of bonds of the district, or for the authorization of contract with the United States, or for the determination of the rate of drainage benefits under contract with the United States or for the ascertainment and assessment of damages to district lands under drainage works, as the case may be, may be examined, approved and confirmed by the court.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 56; C.S. 1929, § 40-256; 1941 Comp., § 77-2056; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-56.

### **73-8-57. [Demurrers and answers to petition for validation of board proceedings.]**

Any person interested in the drainage district or in the issue or deposit of such bonds, or in such other proceedings as may be in issue as herein provided, may demur to or answer the petition. The provisions of Chapter LXXXVIII of the New Mexico

Statutes Annotated, Codification of 1915, respecting demurrer or answer to a verified complaint, shall be applicable to such proceeding. Any person so demurring or answering the petition shall be deemed a defendant to such special proceedings, and the board of directors shall be deemed to be the plaintiff.

Every material allegation of the petition not specifically controverted by answer, shall, for the purpose of such special proceeding, be taken as true; and each person failing to appear, demur or answer the petition shall be deemed to admit as true all the material allegations of the petition.

The rules of pleading and practice relating to appeals and writs of error as provided by the aforesaid Chapter LXXXVIII which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], shall be applicable to the special proceedings herein provided for. Provided, appeals to the supreme court of the state, involving special proceedings herein mentioned, shall be taken within thirty days, and shall be perfected within sixty days after the granting of any such appeal.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 57; C.S. 1929, § 40-257; 1941 Comp., § 77-2057; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-57.

### **73-8-58. [Consideration and judgment on petition to validate board proceedings.]**

Upon the hearing of such special proceedings the court shall find and determine whether the notice of the filing of the petition has been duly given and published as required by this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978], and shall have power and jurisdiction to examine into and determine the legality and validity of, and to approve and confirm each and all of the proceedings for the organization of any such district under the provisions of this act from and including petition for the organization of the district, and all other proceedings which may affect the legality or validity of the aforesaid bonds, or the order for the issuance and deposit thereof, and all of the proceedings, if any, as the case may be, for the authorization of the contract with the United States, and the validity of the determination of the rate of drainage benefits which shall have been made under any such contract with the United States, and of all proceedings for the ascertainment, and assessment of damages to district lands under drainage works.

In inquiring into the regularity, legality or correctness of any such proceedings, the court shall disregard any error, irregularity or omission which does not affect the substantial rights of the parties to any such special proceedings; and the court may by decree approve and confirm such proceeding [proceedings] in part, and disapprove and declare illegal or invalid other portions of any such proceedings.

The cost of any such special proceedings shall be allowed and apportioned between the parties in the discretion of the court.

When finally made and entered the judgment in any such special proceedings shall be res judicata in all cases arising in connection with the organization of the district and the collection of taxes for payment of the principal and interest of bonds, or for payment of monies required by any contract with the United States or for the payment of any indebtedness or obligation incurred under or authorized by the provisions of this act.

Provided, however, that a reopening of the judgment upon the rate of drainage benefits may be had at the petition of the board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 58; C.S. 1929, § 40-258; 1941 Comp., § 77-2058; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-58.

### **73-8-59. ["District" defined.]**

The word "district" as used in this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] shall be held to mean and include only the lands described in the official order establishing any drainage district, and the official plat thereof of record in the office of the county clerk as by this act hereinbefore provided and such other lands as may be subsequently included in any such district in accordance with the provisions of this act.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 59; C.S. 1929, § 40-259; 1941 Comp., § 77-2059; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-59.

### **73-8-60. [Construction.]**

Nothing in this act [73-8-1 to 73-8-60 NMSA 1978] shall be construed as affecting or interfering with the general right of appeal and the rules of practice and procedure relative thereto under existing laws, except as herein specifically limited; and nothing herein contained shall be construed to amend, expressly or by any implication, existing district drainage laws of the state, nor to enlarge or restrict any of the powers of districts organized under such laws, nor to affect any districts organized, or to be organized, under other district drainage laws of the state.

**History:** Laws 1917, ch. 22, § 60; C.S. 1929, § 40-260; 1941 Comp., § 77-2060; 1953 Comp., § 75-21-60.

## **ARTICLE 9**

### **Irrigation Districts**

#### **73-9-1. Organizers' qualifications; exempt areas; exception.**

A. Whenever a majority of the resident freeholders owning more than one-half of the lands, or the evidence of title to the lands, in any district in the state desire to provide for the irrigation of the lands, they may propose the organization of an irrigation district under the provisions of Chapter 73, Article 9 NMSA 1978. When so organized, each

district shall have the powers conferred by law upon irrigation districts. Provided that where ditches, canals or reservoirs were constructed before March 18, 1909, those ditches, canals, reservoirs and franchises and the lands irrigated from them shall be exempt from the operation of Chapter 73, Article 9 NMSA 1978, unless the district is formed to purchase, acquire or lease the ditches, canals, reservoirs and their franchises; or unless a statement, signed by at least four-fifths of the owners of any such ditch, canal or reservoir and of the franchises and water rights of them and of the lands irrigated from them, is filed with the board of county commissioners of each county in which the ditch, canal, reservoir and lands are situate, giving their consent that the ditch, canal, reservoir, franchises, water rights and lands may be included in one or more irrigation districts organized under the provisions of Chapter 73, Article 9 NMSA 1978, which statement shall be recorded in the office of the county clerk of the county.

B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the status of an acequia or community ditch association as a political subdivision of the state if the acequia or community ditch association was established prior to the formation of the irrigation district and has been governed by officers elected pursuant to Chapter 73, Article 2 or 3 NMSA 1978 continuously since the formation of the irrigation district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-201; 1941 Comp., § 77-2101; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-1; 2001, ch. 221, § 3.

### **73-9-2. [Voting power of water users under town or village community ditches.]**

Nothing in this act shall be construed to in any manner affect the rights of water users under community ditches in towns or villages in this state as to their voting power in determining whether any such ditch shall be included in an irrigation district, and each of said water users shall have the same right and voice in determining such question and in the signing of the statement provided for in the preceding section [73-9-1 NMSA 1978] as he has in the control and management of such ditch.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 73-202; 1941 Comp., § 77-2102; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-2.

### **73-9-3. [Petition to establish irrigation district; contents; signatures; filing; cost bond; publication of petition and notice; "resident freeholder" defined; agency.]**

For the purpose of the establishment of an irrigation district as provided by this act, a petition shall be filed with the board of county commissioners of the county which embraces the largest acreage of the proposed district praying that said board define and establish the boundaries of said proposed district and submit the question of the final organization of the same to the vote of the qualified electors resident therein. Said petition shall state that it is the purpose of the petitioners to organize an irrigation district

under the provisions of this act and shall also contain a general description of the boundaries of such proposed district, the means proposed to supply water for the irrigation of the lands embraced therein, the name proposed for such district, and the name proposed need not use the words "irrigation district" but may use the words "water district" or "conservancy district," or other suitable designation, and such petition shall also contain the names of three of said petitioners selected as a committee to present such petition to the board of county commissioners. Said petition shall be signed by a majority of the resident freeholders within said proposed district, and who shall also be the owners in the aggregate of a majority of the whole number of acres of land within the said proposed district. The said petition shall also be accompanied by a good and sufficient bond, to be approved by said board of county commissioners in double the amount of the probable cost of organizing such district, conditioned for the payment of all costs incurred in said proceeding in case said organization shall not be effected, but in case such organization is so effected, then said expenses incurred by the board of county commissioners shall be paid back to said county by said district. Such petition shall be published both in English and Spanish for at least two weeks before the time at which the same is to be presented, in some newspaper of general circulation published in the county where said petition is to be presented, together with a notice signed by the committee of said petitioners selected by the petition for that purpose stating the time and place of presentation of the same to said board of county commissioners. The last publication shall be made not less than five days prior to the time fixed by said notice for presenting said petition.

For the purpose of this act the term "resident freeholder" shall be construed to mean any citizen of the United States who owns lands within the district or the evidence of title to said land, or who is an entryman under the public land laws of the United States or a purchaser under contract for purchase of state lands, and shall also include corporations, associations and copartnerships owning land within the district. The president or vice president of such corporation or association, or any member of such copartnership, if a citizen of the United States, may represent such corporation, association or copartnership respectively in signing such petition or any other petition or protest provided for in this act.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 3; 1927, ch. 148, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-203; 1941 Comp., § 77-2103; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-3.

#### **73-9-4. [Proceedings by county commissioners on receiving petition; boundaries; applications for inclusions and exclusions; adjournments; approval; election; denial of petition; mandamus; management by board of directors.]**

When such petition is presented and it shall appear that the notice of presentation of said petition has been given as required by law, and that said petition has been signed by the requisite number of petitioners as required by this act, the commissioners shall then proceed to define the boundaries of said proposed district from said petition and from such applications for the exclusion of lands therefrom and the inclusion of lands



therein as may be made in accordance with the intent of this act. They may adjourn such examination from time to time not exceeding three weeks in all and shall by final order duly entered upon their records define and establish the boundaries of such proposed district; provided, that the said board shall not modify such proposed boundaries described in the petition so as to change the objects of said petition or so as to exempt from the operation of this act any land within the boundaries proposed by the petition susceptible to irrigation by the same system of irrigation works applicable to other lands in such proposed district; nor shall any land which will not in the judgment of the board be benefited by such proposed system be included in such district if the owner thereof shall make application at such hearing to withdraw the same; provided, also, that contiguous lands not included in said proposed district as described in the petition may upon application of the owner or owners be included in such district upon such hearing, if it shall be determined by said board that the water supply for such additional lands is available and that in other respects it is feasible for the lands of such applicant to be included within such district.

When the boundaries of any proposed district shall have been examined and defined as aforesaid the commissioners shall forthwith make an order allowing the prayer of said petition, defining and establishing the boundaries and designating the name of such proposed district. Thereupon the said commissioners shall by further order duly entered upon their records call an election of the qualified electors of said district to be held for the purpose of determining whether such district shall be organized under the provisions of this act, and by such order shall submit the names of one or more persons from each of the three divisions of said district as hereinafter provided to be voted for as directors therein, and for the purpose of said election shall divide said district into three divisions as nearly equal in size as may be practicable to be numbered respectively 1, 2 and 3, and shall provide that a qualified elector of each of said three divisions shall be elected as a member of the board of directors of said district by the qualified electors of the whole district. Each of said divisions shall constitute an election precinct and the commissioners shall appoint three judges for each of such precincts, one of whom shall act as clerk of said election; provided, that in the hearing of any such petition the board of county commissioners shall disregard any informality therein, and in case they deny the same or dismiss it for any reason on account of the provisions of this act not having been complied with, which is the only reason upon which they shall have a right to refuse to [or] dismiss the same, they shall state their reason in writing therefor in detail, which shall be entered upon their records; and in case such reason is not well founded, a writ of mandamus shall, upon proper application therefor, be issued out of the district court of said county, compelling them to act in compliance with this act, which writ shall be heard within twenty days from the date of its issuance. The affairs of such district shall be managed by a board of three directors.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 73-204; 1941 Comp., § 77-2104; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-4.

### **73-9-5. Irrigation district; notice; election; ballots.**

The board of county commissioners shall thereupon cause notice embodying said orders in substance signed by the chairman and clerk of said board to be issued, given and published, giving public notice of said election, and time and places thereof and the matter submitted to the vote of the electors. Said notice and order shall be published once a week for at least three weeks immediately prior to the date fixed for such election in a newspaper of general circulation published in said county, and if any portion of such proposed district lies within any other county or counties, then such order and notice shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation published within each of said counties. At said election and all elections held under the provisions of this article, all owners of land within such district, who are qualified electors under the Election Code [Chapter 1 NMSA 1978] shall be qualified electors; provided, that if any farm or tract of land in such district is owned by more than one owner, only one person shall be permitted to vote at any election as the owner of such one farm or tract of land; and providing further that at such elections each otherwise qualified voter shall be entitled to cast, and have counted, as many votes as he shall have acres of land owned by him and situate within said district, but in no event shall such voter be entitled to cast, and have counted, more than one hundred votes. Insofar as applicable, the general election laws of the state, except requirements for registration and except as otherwise provided in this article, shall govern such elections. The ballots to be used and cast at such election for the formation of such district, shall have printed thereon the words: "Irrigation District - Yes," and "Irrigation District - No," or words equivalent thereto and also contain the names of the persons to be voted for as members of the board of directors of said district. Each elector may vote for three directors, one from each division, and shall indicate his vote by placing a marginal cross upon the ballot for or against any question submitted or name voted upon and opposite thereto, together with the figure or figures indicating the number of votes he is entitled to cast thereat.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 5; 1927, ch. 54, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-205; Laws 1935, ch. 36, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2105; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-5; Laws 1973, ch. 138, § 31.

### **73-9-6. [Determining and declaring results of election; effect; including district's lands in another district; officers holdover; change of divisions, voting precincts and polling places.]**

The said board of county commissioners shall meet on the second Monday next after such election and canvass the votes cast thereat; and if it appears upon such canvass that at least two-thirds of the qualified electors voting at said election have voted "Irrigation District - Yes," the said board shall, by order duly entered upon the records, declare such territory duly organized as an irrigation district under the name and style theretofore designated, and shall declare the persons receiving respectively the highest number of votes for director to be duly elected to such office. Said board shall cause a copy of such order, including a plat of said district, duly certified by the clerk of the board of county commissioners, to be immediately filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which any portion of such lands are situated, and no board of county commissioners of any county including any portion of such district shall, after the date of organization of such district, allow another district to be

formed including any of the lands of such district, without the consent of the board of directors thereof; and from and after the date of such filing the organization of such district shall be complete and the officers thereof shall immediately enter upon the duties of their respective offices, upon qualifying in accordance with law, and shall hold such offices, respectively, until their successors are elected and qualified. The boundaries of said divisions and the voting precincts and polling places in any such district may, after such first election, be changed by order of the board of directors of the district: provided that the polling places shall be designated in the notice published for every election in the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 6; C.S. 1929, § 73-206; 1941 Comp., § 77-2106; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-6.

### **73-9-7. First election; terms.**

At its first meeting within ten days after the election, the initial board shall determine by lot from its membership one member to serve for a term expiring on the next first Tuesday after the first Monday in December, and one member whose term expires on the same day for each of the succeeding two years, so that the term of one director will expire each year.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-22-6.1, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 271, § 1.

### **73-9-8. Second and subsequent elections.**

The regular election of the district shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in December in each year thereafter, at which one director shall be elected for a term of three years. The person receiving the highest number of votes is elected thereto. Within ten days after receiving his certificate of election, the director shall take and subscribe the official oath and file it in the office of the county clerk of the county where the organization was effected, and thereupon immediately assume the duties of office. Each member of the board of directors shall execute an official bond in the sum of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) which shall be approved by the chairman of the board of county commissioners and recorded in the office of the county clerk. All official bonds shall be in the form prescribed by law for county officials, except that the obligee named in the bond shall be the district. The premiums upon the bonds and any bonds required from any other officer of the district shall be paid by the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 73-207; 1941 Comp., § 77-2107; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-7; Laws 1965, ch. 271, § 2.

### **73-9-9. Irrigation districts; transitional features for present boards.**

Immediately following the next election following the effective date of this section, each board of directors shall determine by lot from its membership one member to serve for a term expiring on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in December of the

following year, and one member whose term expires on the same day for each of the succeeding two years, so that the term of one director will expire each year.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-22-7.1, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 271, § 3.

### **73-9-10. [Location of office; secretary; notice of elections; election board.]**

The office of the board of directors shall be located in the county where the organization was effected. Fifteen days before any election held under this act, subsequent to the organization of the district, the secretary who shall be appointed by the board of directors shall cause notice, specifying the polling places of each precinct, to be posted in three public places in each election precinct, of the time and place of holding the election, and shall also post a general notice of the same in the office of said board, which shall be established and kept at some fixed place to be determined by said board in said county. Prior to the time for posting the notices, said board must appoint from each precinct, from the electors thereof, three judges, one of whom shall act as clerk, who shall constitute a board of election for such precinct. If the board fails to appoint a board of election, or the members appointed do not attend the opening of the polls on the morning of election, the electors of the precinct present at the hour may appoint the board or supply the place of an absent member thereof. The board of directors must, in its order appointing the board of election, designate the hour and the place in the precinct where the election must be held.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 73-208; 1941 Comp., § 77-2108; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-8.

### **73-9-11. [Election board; chairman's powers; opening and closing polls; return.]**

One of the judges shall be chairman of the election board and may: first - administer all oaths required in the progress of any election; second - appoint judges and clerks, if during the progress of the election any judge or clerk ceases to act. Any member of the board of election, or any clerk thereof, may administer and certify the oaths required to be administered during the progress of an election. Before opening the polls, each member of the board must take and subscribe an oath to faithfully perform the duties imposed upon him by law. An elector of the precinct may administer and certify such oath. The polls must be opened at eight o'clock in the morning of election and be kept open until six o'clock p.m. of the same day. It shall be the duty of the clerk of the board of election to forthwith deliver the return duly certified to the board of directors of the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 73-209; 1941 Comp., § 77-2109; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-9.

### **73-9-12. [Determining and declaring result of election; plurality elects.]**

No list, tally paper or certificate returned from any election shall be set aside or rejected for want of form, if it can be satisfactorily understood. The board of directors must meet at its usual place of meeting on the first Monday after election and canvass the returns. If at the time of meeting the returns from each precinct in the district in which the polls were open have been received, the board of directors must then and there proceed to canvass the returns; but if all the returns have not been received, the canvass must be postponed from day to day until the returns have been received, or until six postponements have been had. The canvass must be made in public and by opening the returns and counting the votes cast for each person voted for, or as to each question voted upon, and declaring the results thereof. The board shall declare elected the person receiving the highest number of votes so returned for each office and also declare the result as to any question submitted.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 73-210; 1941 Comp., § 77-2110; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-10.

### **73-9-13. [Election statement and certificates; filling vacancy in office of director.]**

The secretary of the board of directors must, as soon as the result of any election held under the provisions of this act is declared, enter in the records of such board and file with the county clerk of the county in which the office of said district is located, a statement of such result, which statement must show: first, a copy of the publication notice of said election; second, the names of the judges of said election; third, the whole number of votes cast in the district and in each precinct of the district; fourth, the names of the persons voted for; fifth, the number of votes cast in the district for each of such persons; sixth, the names of the persons declared elected; seventh, the result declared on any question submitted, in accordance with the majority of the votes cast for or against such question. The secretary must immediately make out and deliver to the person elected a certificate of election, signed by him and authenticated with the seal of the board. In case of a vacancy in the board of directors by death, removal or inability from any cause to properly discharge the duties as such director, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the remaining members of the board, and upon their failure or inability to act within thirty days after such vacancy occurs, then upon petition of five electors of said district the board of county commissioners of the county where the office of said board of directors is situate, shall fill such vacancy or vacancies. Any director appointed as above provided shall hold his office until the next general election of said district, and until his successor is elected and qualified.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 11; C.S. 1929, § 73-211; 1941 Comp., § 77-2111; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-11.

**73-9-14. [Board of directors; organization; powers; water regulations; delinquent assessments; engineer's report on water supply; contracts; pro rata distribution; delivering water to other lands; assignment of water rights.]**

The directors, having duly qualified, shall organize as a board, elect a president from their number and appoint a secretary. The board shall have power and it shall be their duty to adopt a seal, manage and conduct the affairs and business of the district, make and execute all necessary contracts, employ such agents, attorneys, officers and employees as may be required and prescribe their duties, establish equitable rules and regulations for the distribution and use of water among the owners of said land and generally perform all such acts as shall be necessary to fully carry out the purposes of this act; which regulations, among other things, shall provide that no water shall be delivered from the irrigation system of the district for irrigation of any land while the taxes or tolls due thereon or from the owner thereof for district purposes levied or imposed under the provisions of this act are in arrears for more than twelve months; provided, however, that in the event such local assessments on any land within the district are more than twelve months in arrears, and the owner or tenant thereof shall pay, or satisfactorily secure said district for water assessments imposed for any current year, in advance of the actual delivery of water thereon, then said board may deliver water during such current year upon said lands. As soon as practicable after the board shall have organized it shall employ a competent hydraulic engineer to determine and report upon the water supply available for the district, which report shall be a full and complete record of all hydrographic data available and relating to the stream, streams or other sources of water supply from which water for the district is to be obtained; the report shall contain an estimate of the average amount of water available for each acre of land per year and shall show approximately the probable amounts available for irrigation or storage during each week of the year. The report accompanied by an examination fee of \$25.00, shall be submitted to the state engineer for his examination and if he shall find such report to be a full and complete record of the available hydrographic data, that the calculations are correct and that there will be water in the source or sources of supply sufficient to properly irrigate the lands included within such district, he shall so certify under his hand and official seal. If the report submitted is found to be insufficient, or incorrect, the state engineer shall return the same for correction to the directors of the district with a statement of his objections. If such report is not corrected so as to meet with the approval of the state engineer or if from such report and other available information the engineer is of the opinion that there is not sufficient water in the source or sources of supply to properly irrigate the lands included within said district, he shall disapprove said report.

The board of directors shall have the right to appeal from the decision of the state engineer to the district court of the district in which such irrigation district is located, where the sufficiency and accuracy of the report and available water supply shall be determined. Until the report is approved by the state engineer or the courts, no bond issue shall be made as provided for in Section 15 [73-9-17 NMSA 1978] of this act. A copy of such report shall be kept on file in the office of the state engineer and the

secretary of irrigation district, and shall be available for examination by any person desiring to do so.

Said board shall have the power (in addition to the means to supply water to said district) to construct, acquire or purchase any and all canals, ditches, reservoirs, reservoir sites, water, water rights, rights-of-way or other property necessary for the use of the district and to contract with any person, corporation or other irrigation district for supplying water for any or all of the lands in said district; and also to construct drainage works necessary to prevent or relieve the water logging of any lands within the district. In case of the purchase of any property by said district the bonds of the district hereinafter provided for may be used at their par value in payment without previous offer of such bonds for sale. But no contract involving a consideration exceeding ten thousand dollars [(\$10,000)] and no contract for the purchase, rental or delivery involving annual charges or payments exceeding fifteen thousand dollars [(\$15,000)] per annum shall be binding unless such contract shall be authorized and ratified in writing by not less than a majority of the qualified electors of said district according to the number of votes cast at the last preceding district election; nor shall any contract involving payment in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars [(\$25,000)] in any one year be binding until such contract shall have been authorized and ratified at an election held in the manner provided for the issue of bonds.

The rules and regulations established by said board shall be printed in convenient form as soon as the same are adopted, for distribution in the districts. All waters distributed shall be apportioned to each landowner pro rata to the lands assessed under this act within such district. The board of directors shall have power to lease or rent the use of water or contract for the delivery thereof to occupants of other lands within or without the said district at such prices and on such terms as they deem best, provided the rental shall not be less than one and one-half times the amount of the district tax for which said land would be liable if included in the district lands assessed under this act; provided, no vested or prescriptive rights to the use of such water shall attach to said land by virtue of such lease or such rental; provided, also, that any landowner in said district may with the consent of the board of directors assign the right to the whole or any portion of the water so apportioned to him for any one year where practicable to any other bona fide landowner but only in case such owner shall have fully complied with the provisions of this act.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 12; C.S. 1929, § 73-212; Laws 1933, ch. 63, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2112; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-12.

### **73-9-15. [Meetings of directors; quorum; concurrence; records; entry on lands; acquisition of property; tax exemption.]**

The board of directors shall hold a regular quarterly meeting in their office on the first Tuesday in January, April, July and October of each year and such special meetings as may be required for the proper transaction of business. All special meetings shall be called by the president of the board, or any two directors. All meetings of the board must

be made public, and two members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business; and on all questions requiring a vote there shall be a concurrence of at least two members of said board. All records of the board must be open to the inspection of any elector during business hours. The board, its agents and employees, shall have the right to enter upon any land in the district to make surveys and to locate and construct any canal or canals and the necessary laterals. Said board shall also have the right to acquire all lands, water rights, franchises and other property necessary for the construction, use, maintenance, repair and improvement of its canals, ditches, reservoirs and waterworks; and shall also have the right by purchase or condemnation to acquire rights-of-way for the construction or enlargement of any of its ditches, canals or reservoirs, also lands for reservoir sites.

The title to all property acquired under the provisions of this act shall immediately and by operation of law vest in such irrigation district, in its corporate name, and such property shall be held for the uses and purposes set forth in this act, and shall be exempt from all taxation.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 13; C.S. 1929, § 73-213; 1941 Comp., § 77-2113; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-13.

### **73-9-16. [Acquisition of property; suits; judicial notice and presumption of organization; certified copies as evidence.]**

The said board is hereby authorized and empowered to take conveyances or contracts for all property or rights acquired by it under the provisions of this act in the name of such irrigation district to and for the purposes herein expressed, and to institute and maintain any and all actions, proceedings and suits at law or in equity, necessary or proper in order to fully carry out the provisions of this act, or to enforce, maintain, protect or preserve any or all rights, privileges and immunities created by this act or acquired in pursuance thereof. And in all courts, actions, suits or proceedings the said board may sue, appear and defend in person or by attorneys and in the name of such irrigation district. Judicial notice shall be taken in all actions, suits and proceedings in any court of this state of the organization and existence of any irrigation district in this state now or hereafter organized, from and after the filing for record in the office of the county clerk of the certified copy of the order of the board of county commissioners mentioned in Section 6 [73-9-6 NMSA 1978] of this act; and a certified copy of said order shall be prima facie evidence in all actions, suits and proceedings in any court in this state of the regularity and legal sufficiency of all acts, matters and proceedings therein recited and set forth; and any such irrigation district, in regard to which any such order has been heretofore or may hereafter be entered, and such certified copy thereof so filed for record, and which has exercised or shall exercise rights and powers of such district, and shall have had or shall have in office a board of directors exercising the duties of their office and the legality or regularity of the formation or organization whereof shall not have been questioned by proceedings in quo warranto instituted in the district court of the county in which such district or the greater portion thereof is situated within one year from the date of such filing, shall be conclusively deemed to be a legally



and regularly organized, established and existing irrigation district within the meaning of this act, and its due and lawful formation and organization shall not thereafter be questioned in any action, suit or proceeding whether brought under the provisions of this act or otherwise.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 14; C.S. 1929, § 73-214; 1941 Comp., § 77-2114; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-14.

### **73-9-17. Bonds; authority to issue; election; how payable; form and contents.**

For the purpose of acquiring by purchase or construction, or by any lawful means, necessary reservoirs, water rights, canals, ditches and works, including necessary drainage works, and acquiring the necessary property and rights therefor, and for the purpose of repairing, extending, improving and constructing necessary betterments thereof and thereon, and for the payment or retirement of any or all existing indebtedness not evidenced by outstanding bonds, or for any one or more of such purposes either singly or in combination with one or more of such purposes, and to pay the first year's interest upon the bonds herein authorized or otherwise to carry out the provisions of this act, the board of directors of any district shall estimate and determine the amount or amounts of money necessary to be raised for the purpose or purposes and the amount or amounts of bonds to issue therefor; provided, however, that none of the bonds shall run for a longer period than fifty years from the date thereof. The board of directors shall thereupon call a special election, at which election shall be submitted to the electors of the district possessing the qualifications prescribed by Section 73-9-5 NMSA 1978 the question of whether or not the bonds of the district shall be issued in the amount or amounts so determined. A notice of the election shall be given by one publication in any newspaper published in the county wherein the principal office of the district is located, the publication to be made not less than one week prior to the date of the election. The notice shall specify the time of holding the election and the amount and purpose of the bonds proposed to be issued. The election shall be held and the results thereof determined and declared in all respects as nearly as possible in conformity with the provisions of the statute governing the election of directors; provided that no informalities in conducting the election shall invalidate it if the election has been otherwise fairly conducted. At the election, the ballots shall contain the words: "Bonds - Yes" and "Bonds - No" or words equivalent thereto. If a majority of the votes cast, based upon the number of acres of land owned and voted, by the qualified electors are voted "Bonds - Yes," the board of directors shall, by resolution, immediately determine the amounts and series of the bonds and the due dates thereof and shall immediately thereafter cause bonds to be issued in amounts and payable in series as provided in the resolution. Each bond shall bear interest payable semiannually on June 1 and December 1 of each year. The principal and interest shall be payable at the office of the county treasurer of the county in which the organization of the district was effected as aforesaid and at another place or places, if any, as the board of directors may designate in the bonds. The bonds shall be in such form as the board of directors may determine and be executed in the name of the district and signed by the president, and the seal of

the district shall be affixed thereto and attested by the secretary, except for bonds issued in book entry or similar form without the delivery of physical securities. The bonds shall be numbered consecutively as issued and shall bear the date or dates as may be determined by the board of directors. Any coupons for interest shall be attached to each bond, bearing the facsimile signature of the president. The bonds may provide that they may be registered as to principal only or as to both principal and interest. The secretary shall keep a record of the bonds sold, their number, date of sale, the price received and the name of the purchaser. When the money provided by any previous issue of bonds has become exhausted by expenditures herein authorized and it becomes necessary to raise additional money for such purposes, additional bonds may be issued after submitting the question of issuing the bonds at a special election to the qualified voters of the district and otherwise complying with the provisions of this act in respect to an original issue of bonds.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 15; 1927, ch. 148, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 73-215; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 1; 1935, ch. 36, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2115; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-15; Laws 1957, ch. 228, § 1; 1983, ch. 265, § 55.

### **73-9-18. Sale; notice.**

The board may sell bonds from time to time in such amounts as may be necessary and most advantageous to raise the money for the construction or purchase of canals, reservoir sites, reservoirs, water rights and works, including necessary drainage works, and to repair, extend, improve and to construct betterments for such works or systems and otherwise to fully carry out the objects and purposes of this act. Before making any sale, except as hereinafter provided, the board shall, at a meeting, by resolution declare its intention to sell a specified amount of the bonds and the day and hour and place of such sale, and shall cause such resolution to be entered in the minutes, and notice of the sale to be given by publication thereof, by three insertions in a daily newspaper published in the city of Santa Fe and a like notice in a daily newspaper published in the city of Albuquerque, and any other newspapers, at their direction, the first of which publications shall be not less than twenty (20) days prior and the last not less than five (5) days prior to the date fixed for such sale. The notice shall state that sealed proposals will be received by the board at their office, for the purchase of the bonds, till the day and hour named in the resolution. At the time appointed the board shall open the proposals and award the purchase of the bonds to the highest responsible bidder, and may reject all bids; but said board shall in no event, sell any of said bonds for less than ninety-five percent of the face value thereof. In case no bid is made and accepted as above provided, the board of directors is hereby authorized to use said bonds for the purchase of canals, reservoir sites, reservoirs, water rights and works, or for the construction of any canals, reservoir and works, including drainage works, or for repairs, extensions, improvements or betterments to any of such works or systems, provided such bonds shall not be so disposed of at less than ninety-five percent of the face value thereof. Provided, however, that in the event said board shall negotiate the sale of such bonds to the United States of America, either under the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act, the Agricultural Adjustment Act and

acts amendatory of such acts and acts supplemental thereto and revisions thereof and any further acts of the congress of the United States, heretofore or which may hereafter be passed, then no notice of sale of said bonds shall be necessary and said board shall be fully authorized to make sale thereof to the United States of America or any agency thereof, on such terms and conditions as may be required by the government of the United States, or any agency thereof, without notice, without competitive bidding and on resolution of the board of directors duly adopted and recorded in the minutes.

Upon resolution of the board of directors, funding or refunding bonds may be issued and used by any district organized under the laws of this state, for the purpose of retiring any bonds or any other obligations of the district which may have been issued, or incurred, under the provisions of this or any other act: provided, however, that no refunding bonds shall be issued and used by any district for the purpose of retiring obligations incurred other than bonds until after the question of issuing such refunding bonds shall have been submitted to an election as herein provided and shall have received the affirmative vote of a majority of those voting thereon within such district. Such funding or refunding bonds may be payable at such time or times and bear such rate of interest not exceeding six per centum per annum and may be of such denomination as the board of directors may determine and shall be executed in the same manner and have annexed interest coupons as provided herein for an original issue of bonds. The board of directors shall have power to contract for the purchase and exchange of any part or all of the outstanding funding bonds, refunding bonds or other obligations of the district at any price not exceeding par and accrued interest.

Such funding or refunding bonds, if they be not sold to the United States of America or an agency thereof, as hereinafter provided, shall be first deposited with the county treasurer of the county wherein the office of the district is located and shall be delivered only as and when bonds or other obligations so to be funded or refunded are surrendered to such county treasurer for cancellation and they shall be exchanged only on the basis agreed upon between the board of directors and the creditors of the district, acting individually or through an authorized creditors' committee. Such funding or refunding bonds may also be sold from time to time in such amounts as the board of directors may determine and in the same manner as provided for the sale of the original issue of bonds, at not less than ninety-five percent of their face value, the proceeds to be deposited with the said treasurer, to be paid out by him on order of the board of directors in exchange for any of the outstanding bonds or other obligations that may be so purchased or contracted for by the board of directors, at a price not exceeding the price agreed upon.

The said treasurer shall cancel all bonds of the district as and when the same are paid or refunded, and take full satisfaction of such other obligations as are being funded, and shall cause to be recorded in the office of the county clerk of said county, his certificate [showing] that said bonds and other obligations, giving the dates, serial numbers and amounts thereof, have been paid, canceled and satisfied; and such canceled bonds and other obligations shall be delivered to the board of directors of the district. It shall be the duty of said board of directors to enter upon their records a

statement giving the dates, serial numbers and amounts of the bonds so canceled, and to preserve all receipts and satisfactions of other obligations. Provided, however, that in the event such funding or refunding bonds shall be sold to the United States of America or an agency thereof, under the terms of the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act, the Agricultural Adjustment Act and acts amendatory of such acts and acts supplemental thereto, and revisions thereof and any further acts of the congress of the United States, heretofore or which may hereafter be passed, the cash so received shall be paid out and exchanged for bonds or other obligations intended to be funded or refunded only on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the government of the United States or an agency thereof.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 16; C.S. 1929, § 73-216; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2116; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-16.

### **73-9-19. Bonds; how paid; liens.**

Any and all bonds issued under the provisions of this act, and the interest coupons attached thereto, shall be paid by revenue derived from an annual ad valorem assessment and levy upon all of the real property within the district, which real property shall be and remain liable to be assessed for the payment of such bonds until such bonds, both principal and interest, are fully paid, and said assessment shall be made, levied and collected in the same manner as are general county and state taxes. Said bonds, interest coupons and the assessments made for their payment shall be and remain a perpetual lien upon all of the real property located within said district until said bonds and all interest coupons thereto appurtenant have been paid in full. The sale of any land within the district for general or other taxes [shall] in no manner divest said real property so sold of the lien of said bonds, interest coupons and assessments.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 17; C.S. 1929, § 73-217; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 3; 1935, ch. 36, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2117; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-17.

### **73-9-20. Special proceedings to enforce collection.**

In the event of any default in the payment of the interest upon or principal of any bonds issued, and if the said district or its proper officers shall fail or neglect to enforce payment of any unpaid assessment, the holder of any one of said bonds may, for himself and for the benefit of all others similarly situated, enforce the said liens and collect the assessments by suit or action against the land or lands, property or properties on which such assessment has not been paid, and against said district; or may apply for the appointment of a receiver to collect the assessment and enforce the liens aforesaid; and the proceeds of such assessments and collections shall be applied, after payment of costs, first to overdue interest, and then to payment pro rata of all bonds issued by said board, which are then due and payable; and the said receiver may be directed by suit to foreclose the lien of said assessments on said property. The suits so brought by any bondholder or receiver shall be conducted in all matters as suits for the collection of debts and foreclosure of liens under mortgages and trust deeds, and

the decree in such suits and the deeds issued pursuant thereto shall have the same presumption in their favor: provided, however, that when all such sums have been paid, the receiver shall be discharged, and the affairs of the district conducted by the board as hereinbefore provided.

In any special proceeding commenced under the provisions of this section, the district, and all land and all property or properties on which assessments have not been paid, may be made joint defendants, but separate judgments shall be entered and enforced.

**History:** C.S. 1929, § 73-217a, enacted by Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2118; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-18.

### **73-9-21. President and secretary to compile bond statement.**

Upon the execution, issuance and delivery of such bonds, the president and secretary of the board of directors of any such irrigation district shall, forthwith, compile a statement in detail showing the amount of such issue, the rate of interest, the respective dates of maturity and interest payment dates; and if registered, the name or names of the registered owner or owners of said bonds, certifying to the same under their hands and the official seal of the district. Said certified statement shall thereupon be delivered to the county assessor of the county where such district is located, and if such district be located in more than one county, to the county assessor of each county where any part thereof is located. Thereafter it shall be the duty of said county assessor or county assessors, as and when they prepare the assessment rolls for each succeeding year thereafter, to include an ad valorem tax upon all of the real estate located within said irrigation district, in his county, in an amount sufficient to pay and retire the interest coupons and principal of said bonds, as and when they mature, according to the schedule so furnished by the president and secretary of said district, and it shall further be the duty of the board of county commissioners of said county or counties, as and when it makes it [its] levy for state and county taxes for each succeeding year, to make a levy upon all of the real estate within said district and in their respective counties, upon an ad valorem basis, in an amount sufficient to pay and retire the interest coupons and principal of said bonds, as and when they mature, said assessments and levies to be made in the same manner as taxes for general county and state purposes are levied, as provided by law; it being the intention hereby to place the duty and responsibility of making such assessment and levy upon said district lands for bond and coupon retirement requirements upon the county assessor and county commissioners, after the certified lists of bonds issued have been furnished by the president and secretary, as herein required.

**History:** C.S. 1929, § 73-217b, enacted by Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 77-2119; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-19.

### **73-9-22. Directors certify amounts needed; assessment; no funds to be transferred.**

It shall be the duty of the board of directors of the district, on or before September first of each year, to determine the amount of money required to meet the maintenance, operating and current expenses of the district for the ensuing fiscal year, and such additional sums as may be necessary to meet any deficiency for payment of maintenance or operation expenses theretofore incurred, and to certify the same to the board of county commissioners. Such certificate shall specify the sum required for each of the purposes therein mentioned. The county treasurer shall distribute the proceeds of the ad valorem taxes levied by the county commissioners under this act for the purpose of paying and retiring outstanding bonds and interest coupons, to the credit of a fund to be known as "bond fund" and shall distribute the proceeds of the specific taxes levied on request of the board of directors of said district through their budget for maintenance, operation and current expenses, to a separate fund, established and maintained for said last-mentioned purposes.

It shall be unlawful to transfer any money from either the bond fund or the maintenance, operation and current expense fund, or to use the money therein for any other purpose, so long as any obligations of the district which should be paid out of such funds, respectively, remain unpaid.

The county treasurer is authorized to pay out of said bond fund any matured bond or coupon of the district, upon presentation of said bond, coupon or coupons, for that purpose, and without warrant from the board of directors of said district, and to pay out of the maintenance, operation and current expense fund or funds, any water charges or rentals due by the district and unpaid without warrant signed by the president and secretary of the district, in any case where the district officers neglect or refuse to issue such warrant in time to meet such obligations when due.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 18; 1921, ch. 173, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-218; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 77-2120; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-20.

### **73-9-23. Board of directors to submit accurate description of lands to county assessor.**

That the board of directors of any such irrigation district shall, on or before September first of each succeeding year after the passage of this act, cause to be prepared an accurate description of all of the lands within their respective districts, as then legally constituted, and which lands are liable under the provisions of this act [73-9-17 to 73-9-27, 73-9-50, 73-13-4, 73-13-23 NMSA 1978] to an assessment for debt service or district maintenance purposes; that said list shall be certified to by the president and secretary of the district and delivered to the county assessor or assessors of the county or counties within which said lands or any portion thereof are located.

**History:** C.S. 1929, § 73-218a, enacted by Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 77-2121; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-21.

### **73-9-24. Tax assessments.**

It shall be the duty of the county assessor of any county embracing the whole or a part of any irrigation district, to assess and enter upon his tax rolls each year, the name of the owner, if known, and the description and area of each tract of land in said district in his said county, subject to assessment and taxation under this act, and upon receipt by such assessor of the notice from the county commissioner of the levies to be made as hereinafter provided, he shall extend the same upon his tax roll to be collected in the same manner as other taxes.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 19; C.S. 1929, § 73-219; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 8; 1941 Comp., § 77-2122; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-22.

### **73-9-25. Creation of sinking fund.**

An assessment and levy for the retirement and payment of any outstanding bonds of any such district shall be made for each and every year after the issuance and delivery of such bonds, for the purpose of creating a sinking fund out of which said bonds and interest accruing thereon may be paid, as and when they mature, and a failure or refusal on the part of the taxing officers of said county or counties to make such bond levy, for any year, shall be a misdemeanor and each such taxing officer shall be punished therefor, accordingly.

**History:** C.S. 1929, § 73-219a, enacted by Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 9; 1941 Comp., § 77-2123; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-23.

### **73-9-26. Tax levy.**

It shall be the duty of the county commissioners of the county in which is located the office of any irrigation district, immediately upon receipt of the said certified list of the lands in said district subject to tax hereunder, and upon the receipt of the certificate of said board of directors certifying the total amount of money required to be raised for maintenance, operating and current expenses, as herein provided, to make an ad valorem levy thereupon, such as may be necessary to provide the amount of money required to pay the interest upon and principal of the bonds of said district as the same shall become due; also to fix the specific tax per acre necessary to provide the amount of money required for any other purpose as in this act provided, and which are to be raised by the levy of taxes upon the lands of said district; and to certify said respective levies to the county commissioners of each other county embracing any portion of said district. The rate of levy of ad valorem and specific tax necessary to raise the required amount of money for said district, shall be increased not less than fifteen nor more than twenty-five percent to cover delinquencies and such percentage shall be determined by the board of county commissioners and certified by it to the county assessor of any county embracing the whole or a part of any irrigation district. For the purposes of said district it shall be the duty of the county commissioners of each county in which any irrigation district is located in whole or in part, at the time of making levy for county purposes, to make a levy, as above provided, upon all the lands in said district within

their respective counties, subject to taxation under this act, and to deliver a notice to the county assessor thereof.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 20; 1927, ch. 148, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 73-220; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 10; 1941 Comp., § 77-2124; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-24.

### **73-9-27. County treasurer; duties; bonds and coupons in payment of taxes; accounts; collection and distribution of taxes.**

The county treasurer of the county in which is located the office of any irrigation district, shall be and is hereby constituted ex-officio district treasurer of said district, and said county treasurer shall be liable upon his official bond, and to indictment and criminal prosecution for malfeasance, misfeasance or failure to perform any duty herein prescribed, as county treasurer or district treasurer, as is provided by law in other cases, as county treasurer. Said treasurer shall receive and receipt for all moneys belonging to said district. It shall be the duty of the county treasurer in each county in which any irrigation district is located, in whole or in part, to collect and receipt for all taxes levied as herein provided, in the same manner and at the same time as is required in the receipt for and collection of taxes upon real estate for county purposes.

The county treasurer of each county comprising a portion only of any irrigation district, excepting the county treasurer of the county in which the office of said district is located, on the first Monday of every month, shall remit to the district treasurer aforesaid, all moneys, bonds and coupons theretofore collected or received by him on account of said district. Every county treasurer shall keep a bond fund account and a general fund account. The bond fund shall consist of all moneys received on account of interest and principal of the bonds issued by said district, said accounts for interest and principal each to be kept separate. The general fund shall consist of all other moneys received. The district treasurer aforesaid shall pay out of said bond fund, when due, the interest and principal of the bonds of said district, at the time and at the place specified in said bonds, and shall pay out of said general fund only upon warrants signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary of said district, as herein provided. The district treasurer, on the fifteenth day of each month shall report to the board of directors of said district the amount of money in his hands to the credit of the respective funds above provided. All such district taxes collected and paid to the county treasurer, as aforesaid, shall be received by said treasurers in their official capacity, and they shall be responsible for the safekeeping, disbursement and payment thereof, the sale [same] as for other moneys collected by them as such treasurers; provided, said county treasurer shall not receive any commission for the collection of said district taxes or any extra compensation for acting as such district treasurer, other than the regular salary as such county treasurer, but the district may pay to said treasurer, for clerical assistance, a sum not to exceed twenty dollars [(\$20.00)] per month for each five thousand acres or major fraction thereof, in such district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 21; 1927, ch. 148, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 73-221; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 11; 1941 Comp., § 77-2125; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-25.



### **73-9-28. Taxation; general laws applicable.**

The revenue laws of this state for the assessment, levying and collection of taxes on real estate for county purposes, except as herein modified, shall be applicable for the purposes of this act, including the enforcement of penalties and forfeitures for delinquent taxes. All interest that may be collected on delinquent taxes levied and assessed for district purposes under the provisions of Chapter 41, Laws of 1919, [and] all interest from that source in hands of county treasurers shall be credited to the several district funds in proportion to the amounts thereof as certified by the board of directors of such district. In addition to such penalties and forfeitures the board of directors of each district is hereby authorized to refuse during any current year, to deliver water from the canals and reservoirs of the district, or purchased from any other district, person or corporation, to any land for irrigation thereof or domestic use thereon, so long as any taxes assessed and levied for district purposes against such land, or any interest, cost or penalties accrued thereon, are due, delinquent and unpaid. Provided the judge of the district court of the county where such taxes for district purposes are collected may, upon a satisfactory showing by any landowner in such district, that his failure to pay such taxes, interest or penalties, is due directly or indirectly to the failure of the district to furnish his lands with sufficient water to properly irrigate them, may order the treasurer and collector, whose duty it is to collect such taxes, interest and penalties, to strike from his tax rolls, all penalties assessed for the year or years such failure is so shown, and all interest theretofore accrued on such delinquent taxes in excess of six percent (6%) per annum.

In case the lists or certificates in this act required to be made as the basis for the tax levy for district purposes shall not be made within the time in this act prescribed, or in case such levy is not made or certified by the board of county commissioners before the tax roll is made up for any year, such lists and certificates shall nevertheless be made and such levy made and extended on the tax roll with the same effect as if made within the time prescribed by law. It shall be the duty of the board of directors to purchase in the name of such district any property which may be sold for delinquent taxes under this act, and said board is authorized to take title to such land in the name of the district, and to sell and convey the same when it has acquired title thereto, at a price not less than the taxes, penalty and interest accrued thereon.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 22; 1921, ch. 173, § 2; 1923, ch. 54, § 1; 1927, ch. 148, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 73-222; Laws 1933, ch. 124, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2126; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-26.

### **73-9-29. [Contracts for construction of works; advertisement; bids; contractor's bond; supervision by engineer.]**

After adopting a plan for the construction of canals, reservoirs and works, the board of directors shall give notice, by publication thereof, not less than twenty days in a newspaper published in each of the counties into which any such irrigation district extends, provided a newspaper is published therein, and in such other newspapers as

they may deem advisable, calling for bids for the construction of said work or any portion thereof; if less than the whole work is advertised, then the portion so advertised must be particularly described in such notice; said notice shall set forth that plans and specifications can be seen at the office of the board, and that the board will receive sealed proposals therefor and that the contract will be let to the lowest responsible bidder, stating the time and the place for opening the proposals, which at said time and place shall be opened in public, and as soon as convenient thereafter the board shall let said work, either in portions or as a whole, to the lowest responsible bidder, or they may reject any or all bids and readvertise for proposals or may proceed to construct the work under their own superintendence.

Contracts for the purchase of material shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. The person or persons to whom a contract may be awarded shall enter into a bond with good and sufficient sureties, to be approved by the board, payable to said district for its use, for not less than ten percent of the amount of the contract price, conditioned for the faithful performance of said contract. The work shall be done under the direction and to the satisfaction of the engineer in charge subject to the approval of the board.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 23; C.S. 1929, § 73-223; 1941 Comp., § 77-2127; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-27.

### **73-9-30. [Claims against district; verification; allowance; warrants; register; payment.]**

No claims shall be paid by the district treasurer until the same shall have been allowed by the board, and only upon warrants signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary, which warrants shall state the date authorized by the board and for what purpose: provided, no warrant shall be issued or obligation incurred unless the district treasurer has sufficient funds on hand to pay such warrant when it is presented for payment. All claims against the district shall be verified and the secretary of the district is hereby authorized and empowered to administer [administer] oaths to the parties verifying said claims, the same as the county clerk or a notary public might do. The district treasurer shall keep a register in which he shall enter each warrant as issued and as presented for payment, showing the date and amount of such warrant, to whom payable, the date of the presentation for payment, the date of payment, and all warrants shall be paid in the order of their presentation for payment to the district treasurer. All warrants shall be drawn payable to the claimant or bearer, the same as county warrants.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 24; C.S. 1929, § 73-224; 1941 Comp., § 77-2128; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-28.

### **73-9-31. [Expenses of organization, operation and improvements to be paid from water tolls and/or tax levies; tax levy to complete original construction.]**

For the purpose of defraying the expenses of the organization of the district, and the care, operation, management, repair and improvement of all canals, ditches, reservoirs and works, including drainage works and including salaries of officers and employees and for rental or charges for water supplied to said district under any contract with owners of other irrigation works, the board may fix rates of tolls and charges and collect the same of all persons using said canal and water for irrigation or other purposes, or may provide, in whole or in part, for the payment of such expenditures by levy of taxes therefor, as hereinbefore provided or by both tolls and taxes. In case the money raised by the sale of bonds issued be insufficient and in case bonds be unavailable for the construction or completion of any works in accordance with plans adopted, it shall be the duty of the board of directors to provide for the completion of said works by causing the levy of a tax therefor in the same manner in which levy of taxes is made for the other purposes provided for in this act.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 25; C.S. 1929, § 73-225; 1941 Comp., § 77-2129; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-29.

### **73-9-32. [Crossings authorized; right-of-way over state lands granted.]**

The board of directors shall have the power to construct the said works across any stream of water, watercourse, street, avenue, highway, railway, canal, ditch or flume which the route of said canal or canals may intersect or cross; and if said board and the owners or controllers of the property so to be crossed cannot agree on the amount to be paid therefor, or as to the points or the manner of said crossings, the same shall be ascertained and determined in all respects as is provided by law in respect to the taking of land for public uses. The right-of-way is hereby granted to locate, construct and maintain said works or reservoirs, over, through or upon any of the lands which are now, or may be the property of the state.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 26; C.S. 1929, § 73-226; 1941 Comp., § 77-2130; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-30.

### **73-9-33. Compensation of directors and secretary; personal interest in contracts; bribery; penalty.**

The board of directors shall each receive compensation at the rate of five dollars (\$5.00) per day while attending meetings, and their actual and necessary expenses while engaged in official business. The salary of the secretary shall not exceed twelve hundred dollars (\$1,200) a year. No director or any officer named in this act shall, in any manner, be interested, directly or indirectly, in any contract awarded or to be awarded

by the board, or in the profits to be derived therefrom; nor shall such director or officer receive any bonus, gratuity or bribe; and for any violation of this provision any such director or officer shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and upon conviction thereof shall forfeit his office, and be punished by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500), or by imprisonment in the penitentiary not exceeding five years or less than one year.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 27; C.S. 1929, § 73-227; 1941 Comp., § 77-2131; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-31; Laws 1957, ch. 100, § 1.

### **73-9-34. [Statutory authorization required for debts and liabilities.]**

The board of directors, or other officers of the district, shall have no power to incur any debt or liability whatever, either by issuing bonds or otherwise, in excess of the express provisions of this act, and any debt or liability incurred in excess of such express provisions shall be and remain absolutely void.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 28; C.S. 1929, § 73-228; 1941 Comp., § 77-2132; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-32.

### **73-9-35. [Water volume insufficient; distribution.]**

In case the volume of water in any canal, reservoir or other works in any district shall not be sufficient to supply the continual wants of the entire district and of lands susceptible of irrigation therein, then it shall be the duty of the board of directors to distribute all available water upon certain or alternate days to different localities as they may in their judgment think best for the interest of all parties concerned.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 29; C.S. 1929, § 73-229; 1941 Comp., § 77-2133; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-33.

### **73-9-36. [Prior water rights protected.]**

Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to authorize any person to divert the waters of any river, creek, stream, canal or reservoir to the detriment of any person having a prior right to the waters of such river, creek, stream, canal or reservoir.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 30; C.S. 1929, § 73-230; 1941 Comp., § 77-2134; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-34.

### **73-9-37. [Change of district boundaries; authorization; effect.]**

The boundaries of any irrigation district now or hereafter organized under the provisions of this act, may be changed in the manner herein prescribed; but such change of the boundaries of the district shall not impair or affect its organization, or its rights in or to property or any of its rights or privileges of whatsoever kind or nature, nor

shall it affect, impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge for or upon which it or the owner of lands therein were or might become liable or chargeable had such change of its boundaries not been made.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 31; C.S. 1929, § 73-231; 1941 Comp., § 77-2135; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-35.

### **73-9-38. [Petition for annexation of lands; who may file; contents; acknowledgment.]**

The holder or holders of title, or evidence of title, or any body of land adjacent to or situate within the boundaries of any irrigation district, may file with the board of directors of said district a petition in writing, praying that such lands be included in such district. The petition shall describe the tracts, or body of land owned by the petitioners, but such description need not be more particular than is required when such lands are entered by the county assessor in the assessment book. Such petition shall be deemed to give the assent of the petitioners to the inclusion of said district of the lands described in the petition, and such petition must be acknowledged in the same manner that conveyances of land are required to be acknowledged.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 32; C.S. 1929, § 73-232; 1941 Comp., § 77-2136; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-36.

### **73-9-39. [Notice of proposed annexation; contents; publication; costs.]**

The secretary of the board of directors shall cause notice of the filing of such petition to be given and published once a week for three successive weeks in a newspaper published in the county where the office of said board is situate, which notice shall state the filing of such petition and the names of the petitioners; a description of the lands mentioned in the petition, and the prayer of said petitioners; giving notice to all persons interested, to appear at the office of said board at a time named in said notice, and show cause, in writing, if any they have, why the petition should not be granted. The time specified in the notice at which it shall be required to show cause shall be the regular meeting of the board next after the expiration of the time for the publication of the notice. The petitioner or petitioners shall advance to the secretary sufficient money to pay the estimated cost of all proceedings under such petition before the secretary shall be required to give such notice.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 33; C.S. 1929, § 73-233; 1941 Comp., § 77-2137; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-37.

### **73-9-40. [Hearing on proposed annexation; written objections.]**

The board of directors, at the time and place mentioned in said notice, or at such time or times to which the hearing of such petition may be adjourned, shall proceed to hear the petition, and all objections thereto, presented in writing by any person showing cause as aforesaid why said petition should not be granted. The failure of any person interested to show cause, in writing, as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken as an assent on his part to the inclusion of such lands in said district as prayed for in said petition.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 34; C.S. 1929, § 73-234; 1941 Comp., § 77-2138; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-38.

### **73-9-41. [Petitioners required to pay sums determined by directors.]**

The board of directors to whom such petition is presented may require as a condition precedent to the granting of the same that the petitioners shall severally pay to such district such respective sums, as nearly as the same can be estimated by the board, as said petitioners or their grantors would have been required to pay for their pro rata share of all bonds and the interest thereon which may have previously thereto been issued by said district had such lands been included in such district at the time the same was originally formed or when said bonds were so issued; and said board may require such petitioners to pay such further sums as the board may deem just on account of irrigation works or water rights paid for otherwise than by issue of bonds.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 35; C.S. 1929, § 73-235; 1941 Comp., § 77-2139; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-39.

### **73-9-42. [Decision on petition; survey; allowance nullified by protests within thirty days.]**

The board of directors, if they deem it not for the best interests of the district to include therein the lands mentioned in the petition, shall by order reject the said petition, but if they deem it for the best interests of the district that said lands be included the board may order that the district be so changed as to include therein the lands mentioned in the said petition. The order shall describe the entire boundaries of the district with the lands so included, if the district boundaries be changed thereby, and for that purpose the board may cause a survey to be made of such portion of such boundaries as may be deemed necessary: provided, if within thirty days from the making of such order a majority of the qualified electors of the district protest in writing to said board against the inclusion of such lands in said district, said order shall be held for naught and said lands shall not be included therein.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 36; C.S. 1929, § 73-236; 1941 Comp., § 77-2140; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-40.

### **73-9-43. [Allowance of petition for annexation; certified copy of order and plat; recording; effect; evidence.]**

Upon the allowance of such petition and in case no protest has been filed with the board within thirty days after the entry of said order as aforesaid, a certified copy of the order of the board of directors making such change, and a plat of such district showing such change, certified by the president and secretary, shall be filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which are situate any of the lands of the district, and the district shall remain an irrigation district as fully to all intents and purposes as if the lands which are included in the district by the change aforesaid had been included therein at the organization of the district; and said district as so changed and all the lands therein shall be liable for all existing obligations and indebtedness of the organized district.

Upon the filing of the copies of the order and the plat, as herein mentioned, copies thereof, certified by said county clerk, shall be admissible in evidence to prove the inclusion of said lands in said district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 37; C.S. 1929, § 73-237; 1941 Comp., § 77-2141; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-41.

### **73-9-44. Participation in proceedings for change of district boundaries.**

A guardian, conservator or personal representative of an estate, who is appointed as such under the laws of this state, and who, as such guardian, conservator or personal representative, is entitled to the possession of the lands belonging to the estate which he represents, may on behalf of his ward or the estate which he represents, upon being thereunto authorized by the proper court, sign any petition or protest in this act mentioned, and may show cause, as in this act mentioned, why the boundaries of the district should not be changed or additional lands included therein.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 38; C.S. 1929, § 73-238; 1941 Comp., § 77-2142; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-42; Laws 1975, ch. 257, § 8-129.

### **73-9-45. [Redivision of district after annexation.]**

In case of the inclusion of any lands within any district by proceedings under this act the board of directors shall, if they deem necessary, at least thirty days prior to the next succeeding regular election, make an order redividing such district into three divisions, as nearly equal in size as may be practicable, and one director shall thereafter be elected for each division as hereinbefore provided.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 39; C.S. 1929, § 73-239; 1941 Comp., § 77-2143; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-43.

### **73-9-46. [Exclusion of lands from district; authorization; effect.]**

Any tract of land included within the boundaries of any such district, at or after its organization under the provisions of this act, may be excluded therefrom, in the manner herein prescribed, but such exclusion of land from the district shall not impair or affect its organization, or its rights in or to property or any of its rights or privileges of whatever kind or nature; nor shall such exclusion affect, impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge for or upon which the district or the land so excluded is liable or chargeable, at the time such land is excluded from the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 40; C.S. 1929, § 73-240; 1941 Comp., § 77-2144; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-44.

### **73-9-47. Petition or resolution for exclusion.**

The owner or owners in fee of any lands constituting a portion of any irrigation district, may file with the board of directors of the district, a petition praying that such lands may be excluded and taken from said district. The board of directors of said district may also initiate such exclusion proceedings against any lands which, in their judgment, it would be for the best interests of the district and all parties interested therein to exclude, by resolution adopted by it and included in the minutes of any regular meeting of said board or of any special meeting thereof called for that purpose. Said petition or said resolution shall describe the lands which the petitioners or the board of directors desire to have excluded, but the description of such lands need not be more particular than required when lands are entered in the assessment book by the county assessor. When such exclusion proceedings shall be initiated by petition of landowners, said petition must be acknowledged in the same manner and form as is required in case of a conveyance of land.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 41; C.S. 1929, § 73-241; Laws 1935, ch. 36, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2145; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-45.

### **73-9-48. Petition or resolution for exclusion; notice; publication.**

Upon the filing of said petition for exclusion or upon the adoption of such resolution for exclusion by the board of directors, the secretary of said board shall cause notice of such petition, or resolution to be published, once, in some newspaper published in the county where the office of the board of directors is situated, and, if any portion of said district lies within another county or counties, then said notice shall be published in a newspaper published within each of said counties. Said notice shall state the filing of such petition or the adoption of such resolution, the description of the lands mentioned in said petition or resolution and which it is desired be excluded from such district and it shall notify all persons interested to appear at the office of said board at a time named in said notice and show cause in writing, if any they have, why said petition or resolution should not be finally granted or adopted. The time and place of hearing on said petition or resolution shall be at any regular or special meeting of said board of directors and at



the established office and place of business of said board and shall be upon a date not earlier than five days after the publication of said notice. If said exclusion proceedings be initiated by the landowners by petitions, said petitioners shall advance to the secretary sufficient money to pay the estimated cost of all proceedings on such petition before the secretary shall be required to give such notice. A copy of said notice as published shall be by the secretary of said board mailed to each and all of the then owners of the tracts or parcels of lands proposed to be excluded from said district where said owners and their addresses are known, and in the event the owners of said lands or their addresses are not known, said notice shall be mailed and addressed to any last known owner of said parcel or parcels of land so proposed to be excluded and said notice shall be so mailed not later than five days prior to the date set for hearing.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 42; C.S. 1929, § 73-242; Laws 1935, ch. 36, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 77-2146; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-46.

### **73-9-49. Petition or resolution for exclusion; hearing.**

The board of directors, at the time and place mentioned in the notice or at the time or times to which the hearing of said petition or resolution may have been adjourned, shall proceed to hear and consider any written objections which may have theretofore been filed by any person interested, to said petition or resolution for exclusion, and arguments, if any, by persons interested, in support or opposition to said petition or resolution.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 43; C.S. 1929, § 73-243; Laws 1935, ch. 36, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 77-2147; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-47.

### **73-9-50. Petition or resolution for exclusion; hearing; order; protest.**

If after the hearing provided in the last preceding sections said board of directors deem it not for the best interest of the district that the lands mentioned in the petition or resolution, or any portion thereof, should be excluded from said district, they shall order that said petition be denied or that said resolution be repealed and abrogated, but if they deem it for the best interest of the district that the lands mentioned in the petition or in the resolution, or some portion thereof, be excluded from the district, then the board may order the lands mentioned in the petition or resolution or some defined portion therefor [thereof] to be excluded from the district; provided that if, within ten days from the making of such order, three-fourths of the qualified electors of the district protest in writing, to said board, against the exclusion of said lands from said district, said order shall be held for naught and such lands shall not be excluded therefrom; provided, further, that the exclusion of any lands which are now or may hereafter be included in any such irrigation district shall not be held to relieve any lands excluded from liability to assessment and levy for the purpose of paying and retiring any outstanding bonds and interest coupons which have theretofore been issued, but said lands shall, upon following the procedure provided in the foregoing Sections 73-9-46, 73-9-47, 73-9-48,

73-9-49 and 73-9-51 NMSA 1978, as hereby amended be thereafter wholly excluded from said district for all other purposes.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 44; C.S. 1929, § 73-244; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 12; 1935, ch. 36, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 77-2148; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-48.

### **73-9-51. [Unprotested allowance of petition; certified copy of order and plat; recording; effect.]**

Upon the allowance of such petition and in case no protest has been filed with the board within thirty days after the entry of said order as aforesaid, a certified copy of the order of the board of directors making such change and a plat of such district showing such change, certified by the president and secretary, shall be filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which are situate any of the lands of the district, and the district shall remain an irrigation district as fully to all intents and purposes as if the lands which are excluded by the change aforesaid, had not been excluded therefrom.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 45; C.S. 1929, § 73-245; 1941 Comp., § 77-2149; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-49.

### **73-9-52. [Redivision of district after exclusion.]**

At least thirty days before the next regular election of such district the board of directors thereof may, if they deem it necessary, make an order redividing said district into three divisions, as nearly equal in size as practicable, and one director shall be elected for each division as hereinbefore provided.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 46; C.S. 1929, § 73-246; 1941 Comp., § 77-2150; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-50.

### **73-9-53. [Petition for dissolution of district; who may file; contents; calling election; notice; ballots.]**

Whenever a majority of the resident freeholders, representing a majority of the number of the acres of the land included in any irrigation district organized or hereafter to be organized under this act, shall petition the board of directors to call a special election for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of said irrigation district a proposition to vote on the question of dissolution of said irrigation district, setting forth in said petition that all obligations, bills and claims of every nature whatsoever have been fully satisfied and paid, it shall be the duty of said directors, if they shall be satisfied that all obligations, claims and bills have been fully satisfied, to call an election, setting forth the object of the said election, and to cause notice of said election to be published in some newspaper in each of the counties in which any part of said district is located, for a period of thirty (30) days next prior to said election, setting forth the time and place for

holding said election in each of the voting precincts in said district. It shall also be the duty of the directors to prepare ballots to be used at said election on which shall be written or printed the words: "For Dissolution - Yes," and "For Dissolution - No."

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 47; C.S. 1929, § 73-247; 1941 Comp., § 77-2151; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-51.

### **73-9-54. [Determining and declaring result of election; recording certificate.]**

The board of directors shall name a day for canvassing the vote, and if it shall appear that a majority of said ballots contain the words, "For Dissolution - Yes," then it shall be the duty of said board of directors to make and cause to be entered upon their records an order declaring said district to be dissolved and to certify a copy of said order to the county clerk of each county wherein any part of said district is situated. And clerks shall record all such certificates in the records of the respective counties. Should it appear that a majority of the votes cast at said election were "For Dissolution - No," then the board of directors shall declare the proposition lost and shall cause the result to be made a part of the records of said irrigation district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 48; C.S. 1929, § 73-248; 1941 Comp., § 77-2152; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-52.

### **73-9-55. Bond issue; proceedings to determine validity.**

The board of directors of an irrigation district organized under the provisions of this act may commence special proceedings, in and by which the proceedings of said board and of said district providing for and authorizing the issue and sale of the bonds of said district, whether said bonds or any of them have or have not been sold, or disposed of, may be judicially examined, approved and confirmed.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 49; 1927, ch. 148, § 6; C.S. 1929, § 73-249; Laws 1935, ch. 36, § 8; 1941 Comp., § 77-2153; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-53.

### **73-9-56. Bond issue; petition for proceedings to determine validity.**

The board of directors of the irrigation district shall file in the district court of the county in which the lands of the district, or some portion thereof, are situated, a petition, praying, in effect, that the proceedings aforesaid may be examined, approved and confirmed by the court. The petition shall state the facts showing the proceedings had for the issue and sale of said bonds, and shall state generally that the irrigation district was duly organized, and that the first board of directors was duly elected, but the petition need not state the facts showing such organization of the district, or the election of said first board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 50; 1927, ch. 148, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 73-250; Laws 1935, ch. 36, § 9; 1941 Comp., § 77-2154; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-54.

### **73-9-57. Proceedings to determine validity of bonds; notice of hearing.**

The court shall fix the time for the hearing of said petition and shall order the clerk of the court to give and publish a notice of the filing of said petition. The notice shall be given and published by one publication in any newspaper published in the county where the principal office of said district is located, said publication to be made not less than one week prior to the date fixed for the hearing of said petition. The notice shall state the time and place fixed for the hearing of the petition and the prayer of the petitioners, and that any person interested in said district, or in the proceedings for the issue or sale of said bonds, may, on or before the day fixed for the hearing of said petition, demur to or answer said petition. The petition may be referred to and described in said notice as the petition of the board of directors of . . . . . (giving its name), praying that the proceedings for the issue and sale of said bonds of said district may be examined, approved and confirmed by the court.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 51; 1927, ch. 148, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 73-251; Laws 1935, ch. 36, § 10; 1941 Comp., § 77-2155; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-55.

### **73-9-58. Determining validity of bonds; procedure.**

Any person interested in said district, or in the issue or sale of said bonds, may demur to or answer said petition. The provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure respecting the demurrer and answer to a verified complaint shall be applicable to a demurrer and answer to said petition. The persons so demurring and answering said petition shall be defendant to the special proceeding, and the board of directors shall be the plaintiff. Every material statement of the petition not specifically controverted by the answer shall, for the purpose of said special proceeding, be taken as true, and each person failing to answer the petition shall be deemed to admit as true all the material statements of the petition. The rules of pleading and practice relating to appeals and writs of error provided by the Code of Civil Procedure which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this act are applicable to the special proceedings herein provided for.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 52; 1927, ch. 148, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 73-252; Laws 1935, ch. 36, § 11; 1941 Comp., § 77-2156; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-56.

### **73-9-59. Determining validity of bonds; hearing; decree; costs.**

Upon the hearing of such special proceedings the court shall find and determine whether the notice of the filing of the petition has been duly given and published for the time and in the manner in this act prescribed, and shall have power and jurisdiction to examine and determine the legality and validity of, and approve and confirm, each and all of the proceedings for the organization of said district under the provisions of said

act, from and including the petition for the organization of the district, and all other proceedings which may affect the legality or validity of said bonds, and the order of the sale and the sale thereof. The court, in inquiring into the regularity, legality or correctness of said proceedings, must disregard any error, irregularity or omission which does not affect the substantial rights of the parties to said special proceedings; and the court may by decree approve and confirm such proceedings in part, and disapprove and declare illegal or invalid other or subsequent parts of the proceedings. The costs of the special proceedings may be allowed and apportioned between the parties, in the discretion of the court.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 53; 1927, ch. 148, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 73-253; Laws 1935, ch. 36, § 12; 1941 Comp., § 77-2157; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-57.

### **73-9-60. ["District" defined.]**

Whenever the word "district" is used in this act it shall be held to mean and include only the lands described in the official order establishing said district and the official order including additional lands therein, if any, on record in the office of the county clerk and property and rights acquired by the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 54; C.S. 1929, § 73-254; 1941 Comp., § 77-2158; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-58.

### **73-9-61. [Former districts; validation of organization, bonds and contracts; application of article.]**

Any irrigation district organized after March 18, 1909, and prior to the passage and approval of this act, substantially in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 109 of the Session Laws of 1909, or of Chapter 60 of the New Mexico Statutes, Code 1915, or Chapter 100, Session Laws, 1915, or of Chapter 21, Session Laws of 1917, and any bonds or contracts authorized or issued by any such district substantially in accordance with the provisions of either of said chapters, are hereby confirmed and validated, and such irrigation districts (except districts organized to cooperate with the United States), so organized and existing prior to the passage and approval of this act, and the officers thereof, shall be governed by and be entitled to all the benefits of, and shall have, exercise and perform all the powers and duties prescribed by the provisions of this act.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 55; C.S. 1929, § 73-255; 1941 Comp., § 77-2159; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-59.

### **73-9-62. [Repeal; saving clause.]**

So much of any law as is in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions of this act is hereby repealed; but nothing herein contained shall be held or construed to in any manner affect any irrigation districts organized or to be organized to cooperate with the

United States, under the reclamation service laws, or other federal law, under Chapter 60 of [the] New Mexico Statutes, Code 1915, as amended by Chapter 21, Session Laws of 1917 or any other law authorizing the organization of irrigation districts for the purpose of such cooperation. Chapter LX, New Mexico Statutes, Code 1915, Chapter 100 Session Laws 1915, Chapter 21 Session Laws 1917, are hereby repealed.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 41, § 56; C.S. 1929, § 73-256; 1941 Comp., § 77-2160; 1953 Comp., § 75-22-60.

## **ARTICLE 10**

### **Irrigation Districts Cooperating with United States Under Reclamation Laws; Formation and Management**

#### **73-10-1. [Cooperation with United States under reclamation laws; districts organized; powers.]**

Whenever a majority of the resident freeholders owning more than one-half of the lands or the evidence of title to lands so owned in any district in the state of New Mexico, desire to provide for the irrigation of the same in cooperation with the United States under the federal reclamation law, or other federal laws, for the purpose of the construction of irrigation works, including drainage works, necessary to maintain the irrigability of lands within any such district, or for the purchase, extension, operation or maintenance of constructed works or for the assumption as principal or guarantor of indebtedness to the United States on account of district lands, they may propose the organization of an irrigation district under the provisions of this act. When so organized, each district shall have the powers conferred by law, or that may be conferred by law, upon each irrigation district. Resident entrymen upon public lands of the United States, who are qualified electors, shall be considered as resident freeholders for the purposes of this act, and shall be qualified petitioners for the organization of an irrigation district and shall share all privileges and obligations of private landowners within the district subject to the terms of the act of congress approved August 11, 1916, entitled "An act to promote the reclamation of arid lands." Provided, that where ditches, canals or reservoirs have been constructed before March 18, 1909, such ditches, canals, reservoirs and franchises and the lands irrigated therefrom shall be exempt from the operations of this act; except such district be formed to purchase, acquire, lease or rent such ditches, canals, reservoirs and their franchises; or unless a statement signed by at least four-fifths in number of the owners of any such ditch, canal or reservoir and of the franchises and water rights thereof and the lands irrigated therefrom be filed with the board or boards of county commissioners of the county or counties in which such ditch, canal, reservoir and lands are situate, giving their consent that such ditch, canal, reservoir, franchises, water rights and lands may be included in one or more irrigation districts, organized or to be organized under the provisions of this act.

Districts organized under this act shall have the following incidental powers: to take over the assets and assume the liabilities of water users' associations organized for cooperation with the United States under the provisions of the act of congress approved June 17, 1902, (32 Stat., 388) and acts amendatory thereof, in case a majority of the lands of each association shall be within such district, subject to the provision that the shareholders of such association shall by vote, as provided by their articles of incorporation and bylaws, assent and agree that such assets and liabilities shall be so taken over; to construct, operate, lease and control plants for the generation, distribution, sale and lease of electrical energy, including the sale to municipalities, corporations, firms or individuals of the electrical energy so generated; to promote the agricultural resources and marketing facilities of the district, and to make any appropriation of money, or to take any and all other action necessary to effectuate the purposes here enumerated.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-101; 1941 Comp., § 77-2201; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-1.

### **73-10-2. [Water users under community ditches; voting power unaffected.]**

Nothing in the preceding section [73-10-1 NMSA 1978] shall be construed to in any manner affect the rights of water users under community ditches in towns or villages in this state as to their voting power in determining whether any such ditch shall be included in an irrigation district, and each of said water users shall have the same right and voice in determining such question and in the signing of the statement provided for in Section 1 [73-10-1 NMSA 1978] as he has in the control and management of such ditch.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 73-102; 1941 Comp., § 77-2202; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-2.

### **73-10-3. [Petition for irrigation district; contents; bond; publication of petition and notice of presentation time.]**

For the purpose of the establishment of an irrigation district as provided by this act, a petition shall be filed with the board of county commissioners of the county which embraces the largest acreage of the proposed district; said petition shall state that it is the purpose of petitioners to organize an irrigation district, under the provisions of this act; said petition shall also contain a general description of the boundaries of such proposed district, the means proposed to supply water for the irrigation of the lands embraced therein, the name proposed for such district and shall select a committee of three of said petitioners to present such petition to the board of county commissioners as provided by law, praying that the said board define and establish the boundaries of said proposed district and submit the question of the final organization of the same to the vote of the qualified electors resident within said proposed district; said petition shall be signed by a majority of the resident freeholders within said proposed district, and

who shall also be the owners in the aggregate of the majority of the whole number of acres belonging to the resident freeholders within the said proposed district. The said petition shall also be accompanied by a good and sufficient bond, to be approved by said board of county commissioners in double the amount of the probable cost of organizing such district, conditioned for the payment of all costs incurred in said proceedings in case said organization shall not be effected, but in case such organization is so effected, then said expenses incurred by the board of county commissioners shall be paid back to said county by said district. Such petition shall be published once each week for four successive weeks in some newspaper of general circulation printed and published in each county wherein shall be situate any lands proposed to be embraced in any such district, together with a notice signed by the committee of said petitioners designated in the petition for that purpose, giving the time and place of presentation of the same to the said board of county commissioners.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 73-103; 1941 Comp., § 77-2203; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-3.

#### **73-10-4. [Publications to be in English and Spanish.]**

All publications required by this act shall be made both in English and Spanish and in every instance the last publication shall be made not less than three days before the time fixed by such publication for the taking of the action therein mentioned.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 73-104; 1941 Comp., § 77-2204; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-4.

#### **73-10-5. Boundaries set by petition; divisions; election call; officers.**

A. When the petition is presented and it appears that the notice of the presentation of the petition has been given as required by law and that the petition has been signed by the requisite number of petitioners as required by Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978, the commissioners shall proceed to define the boundaries of the proposed district from the petition and from the application for the exclusion of lands from it and the inclusion of lands in it as may be made in accordance with the intent of those articles. The commissioners may adjourn the examination from time to time, not exceeding three weeks, and shall by final order duly entered define and establish the boundaries of the proposed district. The board shall not modify the proposed boundaries described in the petition to change the objects of the petition or to exempt from the provisions of those articles any land within the boundaries proposed by the petition susceptible to irrigation by the same system of water works applicable to other lands in the proposed district; nor shall any land that will not, in the judgment of the board, be benefited by such proposed water system be included in the district if the owner or entryman of the land shall make application at the hearing to withdraw it. The contiguous lands not included in the proposed district as described in the petition may upon application of the owner be included in the district upon the hearing, in the event



that it shall be determined that the water supply for the additional lands is available and that in other respects it is feasible for the lands of the petitioners to be included within the district.

B. When the boundaries of any proposed district have been examined and defined, the county commissioners shall make an order allowing the prayer of the petition, defining and establishing the boundaries and designating the name of the proposed district. The commissioners shall, by further order duly entered upon their record, call an election of the qualified electors of the district to be held for the purpose of determining whether the district shall be organized under the provisions of Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978 and by the order shall submit the names of one or more persons from each of the divisions of the district provided by those articles to be voted for as directors. For the purpose of the election, the commissioners shall divide the district into divisions, in number as hereinafter designated, as nearly equal in size as may be practical and shall provide that one qualified elector of each of the divisions shall be elected as a member of the board of directors of the district by the qualified electors of the whole district. The board of county commissioners shall establish and define a convenient number of election precincts and designate polling places, subject to amendment by the board of directors for subsequent elections. Three judges shall be appointed for each of the precincts, one of whom shall act as clerk of the election. In the hearing of any such petition, the board of county commissioners shall disregard any informality in it and in case the commissioners deny it or dismiss it for any reason on account of the provisions of Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978 not having been complied with, which are the only reasons upon which they shall have a right to refuse or dismiss the petition, they shall state their reasons in writing in detail, which shall be entered upon their records. In case these reasons are not well founded, a writ of mandamus shall, upon proper application for it, issue out of the district court of the county, compelling them to act in compliance with Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978, which writ shall be heard within twenty days from the date of its issuance.

C. The officers of the district shall consist of the directors, a secretary and a treasurer. The directors and divisions of irrigation districts shall be in number, for districts having an irrigable area of twenty-five thousand acres or less, three; for districts having an irrigable area of more than twenty-five thousand acres and not more than fifty thousand acres, five; for districts having an irrigable area of more than fifty thousand acres and less than seventy-five thousand acres, seven; and for districts having an irrigable area of seventy-five thousand acres or more, nine directors and divisions; provided that the directors of a district having an irrigable area of twenty-five thousand acres or less may by majority vote increase the number of directors and divisions of the district to five.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 73-105; 1941 Comp., § 77-2205; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-5; 2007, ch. 338, § 1.

**73-10-6. Notice of election; qualified electors; general election laws applicable; mailing ballots; preparation and care of ballots.**

A. The board of county commissioners shall thereupon cause notice, embodying the orders in substance, signed by the chairman of the board of county commissioners and the clerk of the board, to be issued and published, giving public notice of the election, the time and place thereof and of the matters submitted to the vote of the electors. The notice and order shall be published once each week for four consecutive weeks prior to the election in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which there are any lands proposed to be embraced in the district. At the election or elections held under the provisions of this act, the following persons shall be deemed qualified electors, and none others:

(1) all resident freeholders who have reached the age of majority and who are owners of two acres or more of agricultural land within the district, or of evidence of title to such lands, or a purchaser under contract for the purchase of such lands from the state and who are citizens of the United States;

(2) all resident entrymen of public lands within the district who have reached the age of majority and who are citizens of the United States; and

(3) a corporation organized under the laws of the state of New Mexico and owning two acres or more of agricultural land within the district shall be entitled to one vote which shall be exercised by the president of the corporation or the person designated by the board of directors.

B. Insofar as applicable the general election laws of the state, except requirements for registration, and except as in this act otherwise provided, shall govern all elections under this act. The ballots to be used and cast at the election for the formation of the district shall be substantially as follows: "Irrigation District ..... Yes," and "Irrigation District ..... No," or words equivalent thereto. Each elector may vote for one director from each division and shall indicate his vote by placing a marginal cross upon the ballot for or against any question submitted and opposite thereto at any election held under this act. At the election for the formation of any irrigation district and at any other election for directors at which other questions are simultaneously submitted, separate ballots for the election of directors shall be used. In such event the separate ballots shall be substantially as follows:

"FOR DIRECTORS FOR ..... DISTRICT"  
(inserting name of district)

"For Director from Division No. 1.

"

(the name of the person voted for to be inserted by the voter)

"For Director from Division No. 2.

"

(the name of the person voted for to be inserted by the voter)

and serially thereafter to the number of directors to be chosen.

C. At all elections for directors, the persons receiving a plurality of the votes cast by qualified electors for directors from the several divisions, respectively, shall be declared elected. At any election held for the formation of an irrigation district under the provisions of this act or at any election held by any such district after its formation for the purpose of voting upon a proposition to issue bonds, or to enter into any contract creating any indebtedness in an amount equivalent in the aggregate to more than one dollar (\$1.00) per acre upon all district lands, or to create any indebtedness in excess of such amount, no such district shall be formed and no such proposition shall be deemed to be authorized or approved unless two-thirds of the votes cast by qualified electors at such election shall be in favor thereof.

D. At any election for the formation of an irrigation district or for the purpose of voting upon a proposition involving the issuance of bonds, or the contracting or creating of an indebtedness in excess of the amount last hereinabove prescribed, voting by mail shall be permissible. Any qualified elector, as defined by this section, desiring to vote by mail may do so by preparing his ballot in the manner prescribed by this act, affixing his signature thereto and mailing the same in a sealed envelope postpaid to the secretary of the district, or he may deliver or cause to be delivered the envelope containing his ballot to the secretary. The ballot may be thus prepared, signed and mailed or delivered at any time after the commencement of the publication of notice of the election and shall be mailed and delivered prior to the time fixed by law for the closing of the polls. All such ballots shall be safely kept by the secretary of the district until the time prescribed by law for the canvassing of the returns of such elections, when they shall be delivered to the canvassing board, by whom they shall be counted in like manner and at the same time as votes cast at the polling places designated for any such election. At the time of delivery of such ballots to the canvassing board, the secretary shall make and subscribe to an affidavit setting forth the number of ballots so received, that same were duly received within the time herein fixed, that the same are all of the ballots so received, and that they are in the same condition as when received.

E. Thirty days prior to any election under this act the board of directors shall cause to be printed a sufficient number of ballots for the purpose of the election, and within five days prior to the election, shall cause a sufficient number of ballots to be delivered to one of the election judges of each division or precinct. Provided, that at all times during the period of thirty days there shall be in the hands of the secretary of the district a sufficient number of ballots for distribution among qualified electors desiring to vote by mail at elections wherein such voting is authorized.

F. In any election for the formation of an irrigation district prior to the designation and qualification of a secretary, ballots, when cast by mail or sealed and delivered as

provided in this section, shall be delivered to the county clerk of the county in which is situate the major portion of the lands within the proposed district, who shall be regarded as ex-officio secretary of the district until the designation and qualification of a secretary as provided in this act.

G. Any person residing within any county in which any portion of an irrigated [irrigation] district shall lie, and who is the owner of two acres or more of agricultural lands within the limits of the district, shall, for the purpose of this act, be considered a resident freeholder.

H. Not less than thirty days before any election, any twenty or more electors in the district, or any distinctly general farmers' nonprofit, cooperative organization or association of the district, may file with the board of directors a petition requesting that certain persons specified in the petition be placed on the ballots as candidates for the office or offices named in the petition. The names proposed by the various petitions so filed, and no others, shall be printed on the ballots, but there shall be sufficient blank spaces left in which electors may write other names if they so desire. The petitions shall be preserved in the office of the secretary of the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 6; 1921, ch. 39, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-106; 1941 Comp., § 77-2206; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-6; Laws 1973, ch. 138, § 32; 1981, ch. 312, § 1.

### **73-10-7. Districts 25,000 acres or less; qualified electors.**

A. In any district having an irrigable area of twenty-five thousand acres or less, a "qualified elector" is any person who:

(1) owns one-half acre or more of agricultural land within the district or has evidence of title to such lands or is a purchaser of such lands under contract for the purchase of such lands from the state; or

(2) is a resident entryman of public lands within the district; and

(3) meets all other requirements of Section 73-10-7 NMSA 1978.

B. Any person who meets the qualifications of Section [Paragraph] A(1) is a resident freeholder.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-23-6.1, enacted by Laws 1971, ch. 161, § 1.

### **73-10-8. [Canvass of votes; order declaring district organized; organization complete upon recording of order.]**

The said board of county commissioners shall meet on the second Monday next succeeding such election and proceed to canvass the votes cast thereat: and if, upon such canvass, it appears that two-thirds of the votes cast by the qualified electors at

such election have voted "Irrigation District - Yes," the said board shall, by order entered on their minutes, declare such territory duly organized as an irrigation district, under the name and style theretofore designated, and shall declare the persons receiving, respectively, the highest number of votes for such several offices to be duly elected to such offices. Said board shall cause a copy of such order, including a plat of said district, duly certified by the clerk of the board of county commissioners, to be immediately filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which any portion of such lands are situated, and no board of county commissioners of any county, including any portion of such district, shall, after the date of organization of such district, allow another district to be formed, including any of the lands of such district, without the consent of the board of directors thereof; and from and after the date of such filing, the organization of such district shall be complete, and the officers thereof shall immediately enter upon the duties of their respective offices upon qualifying in accordance with law, and shall hold such offices, respectively, until their successors are elected and qualified.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 7; 1921, ch. 72, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-107; 1941 Comp., § 77-2207; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-7.

### **73-10-9. [First election of directors; biennial elections thereafter.]**

At the first regular election of any such irrigation district held after the passage of this act [73-10-8, 73-10-9 NMSA 1978], directors from odd-numbered divisions of any such district shall be elected for a term of two years each, and directors from even-numbered divisions for a term of four years each. At each succeeding biannual [biennial] election for directors, after the first held hereafter, successors to the directors whose terms expire that year shall be elected for a term of four years each.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 72, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 73-108; 1941 Comp., § 77-2208; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-8.

### **73-10-10. [Election of officers; oath; bonds of directors.]**

The regular election of said district shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in December in each second calendar year thereafter, at which said officers shall be elected. The person receiving the highest number of votes for any office to be filled at such election is elected thereto. Within ten days after receiving their certificates of election, hereinafter provided for, said officers shall take and subscribe the official oath and file the same in the office of the county clerk of the county where the organization was effected, and thereupon immediately assume the duties of their respective offices. Each member of said board of directors shall execute an official bond in the sum of three thousand dollars (\$3,000), which bond shall be approved by the chairman of the board of county commissioners of said county where such organization was effected, and shall be recorded in the office of the county clerk thereof. All official bonds herein provided for shall be in form prescribed by law for official bonds for county officials, except that the obligee named in said bond shall be the said district. Premiums upon bonds of directors and also the premium upon the extra amount of the bond

required to be given by the treasurer and ex-officio collector acting as district treasurer under the provisions of this act shall be paid by the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 73-109; 1941 Comp., § 77-2209; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-9.

### **73-10-11. [Office of directors; notice of election; judges; time and place.]**

The office of the board of directors shall be located in the county where the organization was effected. Fifteen days before any election held under this chapter, subsequent to the organization of the district, the secretary who shall be appointed by the board of directors shall cause notice specifying the polling places of each precinct to be posted in three public places in each election precinct, of the time and place of holding the election, and shall also post a general notice of the same in the office of said board, which shall be established and kept at some fixed place to be determined by said board in said county. Prior to the time for posting the notices, said board must appoint from each precinct, from the electors thereof, three judges, one of whom shall act as clerk, who shall constitute a board of election for such precinct. If the board fails to appoint a board of election, or the members appointed do not attend the opening of the polls on the morning of election, the electors of the precinct present at the hour may appoint the board or supply the place of an absent member thereof. The board of directors must, in its order appointing the board of election, designate the hour and the place in the precinct where the election must be held.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 73-110; 1941 Comp., § 77-2210; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-10.

### **73-10-12. [Oaths of judges; opening and closing of polls; returns.]**

One of the judges shall be chairman of the election board and may: first, administer all oaths required in the progress of any election; second, appoint judges and clerks, if during the progress of the election any judge or clerk ceases to act. Any member of the board of election, or any clerk thereof, may administer and certify the oaths required to be administered during the progress of an election. Before opening the polls, each member of the board must take and subscribe an oath to faithfully perform the duties imposed on them [him] by law. An elector of the precinct may administer and certify such oath. The polls must be opened at 8 o'clock in the morning of the election and be kept open until 6 o'clock p.m. of the same day. It shall be the duty of the clerk of the board of election to forthwith deliver the return duly certified by the board of directors of the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 73-111; 1941 Comp., § 77-2211; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-11.

### **73-10-13. Absent voting permitted.**

A. In any election of officers of the irrigation district, a qualified elector shall be entitled to vote by absent ballot. Absent ballots shall be furnished by the secretary of the board of directors and such ballots shall be in a form prescribed by the board of directors. In addition to the absent ballot, the secretary of the board of directors shall furnish each qualified elector requesting an absent ballot an official inner envelope for use in sealing the completed absent ballot and an official outer envelope for use in returning the inner envelope to the secretary.

B. A qualified elector voting by absent ballot shall secretly mark his ballot, place it in the official inner envelope and securely seal the envelope. He shall then place the inner envelope inside the outer envelope and securely seal the envelope. The qualified elector shall then sign his name and address on the outer envelope and deliver or mail it to the secretary of the board of directors any time prior to the opening of the polls on election day.

C. Upon receipt of an absent ballot, the secretary of the board of directors shall remove the outer envelope and enter in a register the name and address of the qualified elector and the date and time the ballot was received. The secretary shall keep the inner envelope sealed and unmarked or unidentified in any manner as to the qualified elector and place it in a safe place until the opening of the polls on election day. At the time the polls open on election day, the secretary shall deliver all the sealed inner envelopes to the chairman of the election board of the precinct nearest to the office of the district. The sealed inner envelopes shall be accompanied by a signed affidavit setting forth the number of ballots received, the number of ballots delivered and a statement to the effect that the ballots delivered are in the same condition as when received.

D. Absent ballots shall be counted, tallied and canvassed as are other ballots.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-23-11.1, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 112, § 1.

#### **73-10-14. [Canvass of votes when all returns received; procedure; declaration of result of election.]**

No lists, tally paper or certificates returned from any election shall be set aside or rejected for want of form, if it can be satisfactorily understood. The board of directors must meet at its usual place of meeting on the first Monday after election and canvass the returns. If at the time of meeting the returns from each precinct in the district in which the polls were open have been received, the board of directors must then and there proceed to canvass the returns; but if all the returns have not been received the canvass must be postponed from day to day until the returns have been received, or until six postponements have been had. The canvass must be made in public and by opening the returns and counting the votes of the districts for each person voted for, and declaring the results thereof. The board shall declare elected the person receiving the highest number of votes so returned for each office and also declare the result of any question submitted.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 11; C.S. 1929, § 73-112; 1941 Comp., § 77-2212; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-12.

### **73-10-15. [Statement of results; certificates of election; vacancy in office of director.]**

The secretary of the board of directors must, as soon as the result of any election held under the provisions of this act is declared, enter in the records of such board and file with the county clerk of the county in which the office of said district is located a statement of such results, which statements must show: first, a copy of the published notice of said election; second, the names of the judges of said election; third, the whole number of votes cast in the district and in each precinct of the district; fourth, the names of the persons voted for; fifth, the number of votes given in each precinct for such persons; sixth, the number of votes given in the districts for each of such persons; seventh, the names of the persons declared elected; eighth, the result declared on any question submitted in accordance with the majority of the votes cast for or against such question. The board of directors must declare elected the person having the highest number of votes given for each office, and also the result of any question submitted. The secretary must immediately make out and deliver to such person a certificate of election, signed by him and authenticated with the seal of the board. In case of a vacancy in the board of directors, by death, removal or inability, from any cause, to properly discharge the duties of such director, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the remaining members of the board, and upon their failure or inability to act within thirty days after such vacancy occurs, then upon petition of five electors of said district the board of county commissioners of the county where the office of said board of directors is situate, shall fill such vacancy or vacancies. Any director appointed as above provided shall hold his office until the next general election of said district, and until his successor is elected and qualified.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 12; C.S. 1929, § 73-113; 1941 Comp., § 77-2213; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-13.

### **73-10-16. [Board of directors; organization; powers and duties; cooperation with United States; rules and regulations.]**

The directors, having duly qualified, shall organize a board, elect a president from their number and appoint a secretary. The board shall have power, and it shall be their duty to adopt a seal, manage and conduct the affairs and business of the district, make and execute all necessary contracts, employ such agents, attorneys, officers and employes [employees] as may be required and prescribe their duties and establish equitable rules and regulations for the distribution and use of water among the owners of said land.

The board may make investigations, and base thereon such representations and assurances to the secretary of the interior as may be requisite under the said act of congress of August 11, 1916. The board shall generally perform all such acts as may be



necessary to fully carry out the purposes of this act. Said board may also enter into any obligation or contract with the United States for the construction, operation and maintenance of the necessary work for the delivery and distribution of water therefrom, or for drainage of district lands, or for the assumption, as principal or guarantor, of indebtedness to the United States on account of district lands or for the temporary rental of water under the provisions of this act, and of the federal reclamation law and all acts amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto, and the rules and regulations established thereunder; or the board may contract with the United States for water supply under any act of congress providing for or permitting such contract, and in case contract has been, or may hereafter be made with the United States, as herein provided, bonds of the district may be deposited with the United States, at ninety-five percent of their par value, to the amount to be paid by the district to the United States under any such contract, the interest on said bonds to be provided for by assessment and levy as in the case of other bonds of the district, and regularly paid to the United States to be applied as provided in such contract, and if bonds of the district are not so deposited it shall be the duty of the board of directors to include, as a part of any levy or assessment now provided for by law, an amount sufficient to meet each year all payments accruing under the terms of any such contract; and the board may accept, on behalf of the district, appointment of the district as fiscal agent of the United States, or authorization of the district by the United States to make collections of moneys for or on behalf of the United States in connection with any federal reclamation project, whereupon the district shall be authorized so to act and to assume the duties and liabilities incident to such action, and the said board shall have full power to do any and all things required by the federal statutes now or hereafter enacted and regulations now or that may hereafter be established by any department of the federal government in regard thereto.

Districts cooperating with the United States may rent or lease water to lands of entrymen or municipalities in the neighborhood of the districts in pursuance of contract with the United States.

The said board shall have the power, in addition to the means to supply water to said district, to construct, acquire or purchase any and all canals, ditches, reservoirs, sites, water, water rights, rights-of-way or other property necessary for the use of the district. In case of the purchase of any property by said district, the bonds of the district hereinafter provided for may be used at their par value in payment, without previous offer of such bonds for sale.

All waters distributed shall be apportioned to each landowner or entryman pro rata to the lands assessed under this act within such district. The board of directors shall have the power to lease or rent the use of water or electrical energy, or contract for the delivery thereof to occupants of other lands or municipalities within or without the said district at such prices and such terms as they deem best, but the rental shall not be less or on terms more favorable than those fixed for district lands. Provided no vested or prescriptive rights to the use of such water shall attach to said land by virtue of such lease or such rental. And, provided further, no rules shall be prescribed or regulations

enforced which shall interfere with the vested rights of any water user or with the exercise of such rights of any such water user.

Any landowner or entrymen in said district may, with the consent of the board of directors, assign the right to the whole or any portion of the water so apportioned to him for any one year where practicable, to any other bona fide landowner; provided, such owner or entrymen shall have paid all amounts due on assessments upon all such lands.

Provided, further, that all water, the right to use of which is acquired by the district under any contract with the United States, shall be distributed and apportioned by the district in accordance with the acts of congress and rules and regulations of the secretary of the interior, and the provisions of said contract in relation thereto.

The rules and regulations provided in this section, as soon as adopted or furnished by the secretary of the interior, as the case may be, shall be printed in convenient form for distribution in the district. Such rules and regulations, among other things, may provide that no water shall be delivered from the irrigation system of the district for the irrigation of any land while the taxes or tolls due thereon, or from the owner thereof, for district purposes, levied or imposed under the provisions of this act are in arrears for more than twelve months, but nothing herein shall be construed as preventing said irrigation district from collecting any assessment by any other lawful method.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 13; 1921, ch. 39, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 73-114; 1941 Comp., § 77-2214; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-14.

### **73-10-17. [Regular and special meetings; records; right of entry on lands; right to acquire lands and property.]**

The board of directors shall hold a regular quarterly meeting in their office on the first Tuesday in January, April, July and October, and such special meetings as may be required for the proper transaction of business. All special meetings shall be called by the president of the board or a majority of the directors. All meetings of the board must be public, and a majority of the board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. All records of the board must be open to the inspection of any elector during the business hours. And in case any district is appointed fiscal agent of the United States or by the United States is authorized to make collections for or on behalf of the United States in connection with any federal irrigation project, such boards of directors or the secretary thereof shall at any time allow any officer or employee [employee] of the United States, when acting under the order of the secretary of the interior, to have access to all books, records and vouchers of the district which are in possession or control of the secretary or of said board. The board, its agents and employees [employees] shall have the right to enter upon any land in the district to make surveys and to locate any canal or canals and the necessary laterals. Said board shall also have the right to acquire all lands, water rights, franchises and other property necessary for the construction, use, maintenance, repair and improvement of its canals, ditches,

reservoirs and waterworks; and shall also have the right by purchase or condemnation to acquire rights-of-way for the construction, enlargement, extension or improvement of any of its ditches, canals, reservoirs or other necessary works.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 14; C.S. 1929, § 73-115; 1941 Comp., § 77-2215; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-15.

### **73-10-18. [Compensation of board members; president; interest in contracts prohibited; penalty.]**

The members of the board of directors other than the president shall receive compensation at the rate of not to exceed five dollars [(\$5.00)] per day while attending meetings or otherwise necessarily employed in the discharge of their duties and their actual and necessary traveling expenses while engaged in official business. The president of said board shall receive as compensation not to exceed one hundred and fifty dollars [(\$150)] per annum for each ten thousand acres of land or major fraction thereof included within the district, said compensation to be set by the board of directors, and his actual and necessary traveling expenses while engaged in official business. No director or officer named in this act shall in any manner, be interested, directly or indirectly, in any contract awarded or to be awarded by the board, or in the profits to be derived therefrom; nor shall receive any bonus, gratuity or bribe, and for any violation of this provision such officer shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and such conviction shall work a forfeiture of his office, and he shall be punished by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars [(\$500)], or by imprisonment in the penitentiary not exceeding five years.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 30; C.S. 1929, § 73-131; Laws 1937, ch. 74, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2216; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-16.

### **73-10-19. [Property acquired by district; title; tax exemption; conveyance to United States.]**

The title to all property acquired under the provisions of this act shall immediately and by operation of law vest in such irrigation district, in its corporate name, and shall be held by such district in trust for, and is hereby dedicated and set apart for the uses and purposes set forth in this act, and shall be exempt from all taxation; and said board is authorized and empowered to hold, use, acquire, manage, occupy and possess said property as herein provided; provided, that when any district contemplated in this act shall find it necessary to procure and acquire a supply of water from outside the boundaries of this state, then and in such event it shall be lawful for said district to contract and pay for the same in the same manner as other property acquired by the district is purchased and paid for: provided, further, that any property acquired by the district may be conveyed to the United States insofar as the same may be needed for the construction, operation and maintenance of works by the United States for the benefit of the district under any contract that may be entered into by the United States pursuant to this act.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 15; C.S. 1929, § 73-116; 1941 Comp., § 77-2217; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-17.

### **73-10-20. [Legal status of irrigation district; conveyances; court proceedings.]**

The said board is hereby authorized and empowered to take conveyances or assurances for all property acquired by it under the provisions of this act in the name of such irrigation district to and for the purpose herein expressed, and to institute and maintain any and all actions and proceedings, suits at law or in equity, necessary or proper in order to fully carry out the provisions of this act, or to enforce, maintain, protect or preserve any of the rights, privileges and immunities created by this act or acquired in pursuance thereof. And in all courts, actions, suits or proceedings the said board may sue, appear and defend in person or by attorneys and in the name of such irrigation district. Judicial notice shall be taken in all actions, suits and judicial proceedings in any court of this state of the organization and existence of any irrigation district of this state now or hereafter organized, from and after the filing for record in the office of the county clerk of the certified copy of the order of the board of county commissioners mentioned in Section 7 [73-10-8 NMSA 1978], and a certified copy of said order shall be prima facie evidence in all actions, suits and proceedings in any court of this state of the regularity and legal sufficiency of all acts, matters and proceedings therein recited and set forth; and any such irrigation district, in regard to which any such order has been heretofore or may hereafter be entered, and such certified copy thereof, so filed for record, and which has exercised or shall exercise rights and powers of such district, and shall have had or shall have in office a board of directors exercising the duties of their office and the legality or regularity of the formation or organization whereof shall not have been questioned by proceedings in quo warranto instituted in the district court of the county in which such district or the greater portion thereof is situated within one year from the date of such filing, shall be conclusively [conclusively] deemed to be a legally and regularly organized, established and existing irrigation district within the meaning of this act and its due and lawful formation and organization shall not thereafter be questioned in any action, suit or proceeding whether brought under the provisions of this act or otherwise.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 16; C.S. 1929, § 73-117; 1941 Comp., § 77-2218; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-18.

### **73-10-21. [Plan for construction; advertising for bids; contractors bonds.]**

After adopting a plan for the construction of canals, reservoirs and works, the board of directors shall give notice, by publication thereof, not less than twenty days in a newspaper published in each of the counties into which any such irrigation extends, provided a newspaper is published therein, and in such other newspapers as they may deem advisable, calling for bids for the construction of said work or any portion thereof; if less than the whole work is advertised, then the portion so advertised must be

particularly described in such notice; said notice shall set forth that plans and specifications can be seen at the office of the board, and that the board will receive sealed proposals therefor and that the contract will be let to the lowest responsible bidder, stating the time and place for opening the proposals, which at said time and place shall be opened in public, and as soon as convenient thereafter, the board shall let said work, either in portions or as a whole, to the lowest responsible bidder, or they may reject any or all bids and readvertise for proposals or may proceed to construct the work under their own superintendence.

Contracts for the purchase of material shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. The person or persons to whom a contract may be awarded shall enter into a bond with good and sufficient sureties, to be approved by the board, payable to said district for its use, for not less than ten percent of the amount of the contract price, conditioned for the faithful performance of said contract. The work shall be done under the direction and to the satisfaction of the engineer in charge and be approved by the board.

Provided, that the provisions of this section shall not apply in the case of any contract between the district and the United States.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 26; C.S. 1929, § 73-127; 1941 Comp., § 77-2219; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-19.

### **73-10-22. [Rights-of-way over private property; eminent domain; state lands.]**

The board of directors shall have the power to construct the said works across any stream of water, watercourse, street, avenue, highway, railway, canal, ditch or flume which the route of said canal or canals may intersect or cross; and if such railroad company and said board, or the owners and controllers of said property, thing or franchise so to be crossed, cannot agree upon the amount to be paid therefor, or the points or the manner of said crossings, the same shall be ascertained and determined in all respects as is provided in respect to the taking of land for public uses. The right-of-way is hereby given, dedicated and set apart, to locate, construct and maintain said works or reservoirs, over, through or upon any of the lands which are now, or may be the property of the state.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 29; C.S. 1929, § 73-130; 1941 Comp., § 77-2220; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-20.

### **73-10-23. [Joint works; union with districts of adjoining states; proportionate ownership; bond issues; management.]**

It is lawful for any irrigation district or districts organized under the laws of the state of New Mexico to unite with any irrigation district or districts of an adjoining state or states in the purchase, acquisition or construction, and in the annual cost of operation

and maintenance, of a system of irrigation and drainage works for the irrigation of the land and maintaining the irrigability of the land within the said respective irrigation districts, and may also unite in the purchase, acquisition or construction, and in the annual operation and maintenance of hydroelectric power plants, transmission lines, etc., for the sale and distribution of electric power, and in such case, or cases, said irrigation districts are hereby jointly granted the same power of condemnation as is now possessed by each district under the laws of the state in which organized, and the cost of purchase, acquisition or construction, together with the annual cost of operation and maintenance of such irrigation, drainage system or power plants, shall be apportioned to each district in proportion to the irrigable acreage therein for which water shall be provided. Such joint works shall be owned jointly in proportion to such respective acreages, provided that the lands lying in the two or more said irrigation districts so united shall receive water from a common source; and provided, also, that such irrigation district or districts of such other adjoining state or states shall be duly organized under the laws of that state and for purposes the same or similar as the district or districts in this state desirous so to unite. Whenever it is deemed advisable and agreed to between such districts, lying in the same or adjoining states, that for the construction, acquisition or purchase of irrigation works for hydroelectric power plants, etc., it is necessary to issue bonds, it shall be lawful for such districts to issue bonds in proportion to their respective acreage, and such districts may be made jointly or severally liable for the repayment of such bonds. The terms and conditions of such joint ownership, operation and maintenance of issuance of bonds, as the case may be, shall be set out in a written contract. Any such contract shall not be binding until the same shall have been ratified by the electors of each of such districts in the manner provided by law for a bond issue by such districts respectively. An election shall be held in each such district to determine whether such contract shall be adopted. Such contract shall be printed, or in writing, and a true copy shall be filed in the office of each district fifteen days prior to such election, and be subject to public inspection, and one true copy shall be furnished each voter calling at such office for the same at any time fifteen days prior to such election. When such works are to be constructed by two or more districts, bids may be jointly called for and may be opened and considered at the designated office of either of such districts, and such districts shall approve the letting of the contract, and the contractor's bond, and may meet for that purpose at a place outside of their district, or at any office established for such joint project and at which all business of such joint project may be transacted. All bids, bonds, contracts, etc., of such joint project may be in the names of such joint project districts, and such districts, being empowered and authorized to do all acts by joint action that one district may do, the action of each district being determined by its board of directors. A general manager may be employed for such joint enterprise whose duties may be set forth in the joint ownership contract. Such contracts may be amended in the same manner.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 16; C.S. 1929, § 73-170; 1941 Comp., § 77-2221; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-21.

**73-10-24. [Water supply inadequate; distribution on alternate days.]**

In case the volume of water in any canal, reservoir or other works in any district shall not be sufficient to supply the continual wants of the entire district and susceptible of irrigation therefrom, then it shall be the duty of the board of directors to distribute all available water upon certain or alternate days to different localities, as they may in their judgment think best for the interests of all parties concerned.

Provided: that all water the right to the use of which is acquired by the district under any contract with the United States, shall be distributed and apportioned by the district in accordance with the acts of congress, and rules and regulations of the secretary of interior and provisions of such contract in relation thereto.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 32; C.S. 1929, § 73-133; 1941 Comp., § 77-2222; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-22.

### **73-10-25. [Preservation of prior rights.]**

Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to authorize any person or persons, to divert the waters of any river, creek, stream, canal or reservoir to the detriment of any person or persons having a prior right to the waters of such river, creek, stream, canal or reservoir.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 33; C.S. 1929, § 73-134; 1941 Comp., § 77-2223; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-23.

### **73-10-26. [Change of boundaries; effect; assent of secretary of the interior.]**

The boundaries of any irrigation district now or hereafter organized under the provisions of this act may be changed in the manner herein prescribed; but such change of the boundaries of the district shall not impair or affect its organization, or its rights in or to property or any of its rights or privileges of whatsoever kind or nature, nor shall it affect, impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge, for, or upon which it was or might become liable or chargeable had such change of boundaries not been made; provided, that if the secretary of the interior shall give his assent to a change in boundaries in writing filed with the board of directors, any lands to the exclusion of which from the district assent shall thus be given, shall be discharged from any and all liens in favor of the United States under any contract which shall have been made with the United States and any bonds deposited with its agents.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 34; C.S. 1929, § 73-135; 1941 Comp., § 77-2224; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-24.

### **73-10-27. [Petition for inclusion of additional lands.]**

The holder or holders of title, or evidence of title, of any body of land adjacent to or situate within the boundaries of any irrigation district, may file with the board of directors of said district a petition in writing praying that such lands be included in such district. The petition shall describe the tracts, or body of land owned by the petitioners, but such description need not be more particular than is required when such lands are entered by the county assessor in the assessment book. Such petition shall be deemed to give the assent of the petitioners to the inclusion in said district of the lands described in the petition, and such petition must be acknowledged in the same manner that conveyances of land are required to be acknowledged.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 35; C.S. 1929, § 73-136; 1941 Comp., § 77-2225; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-25.

### **73-10-28. [Publication of notice of petition for including lands; objections; payment of estimated cost of proceedings.]**

The secretary of the board of directors shall cause notice of the filing of such petition to be given and published once each week for three successive weeks in a newspaper published in the county where the office of said board is situate, which notice shall state the filing of such petition and the names of the petitioners; a description of the lands mentioned in the petition, and the prayer of said petitioners; giving notice to all persons interested, to appear at the office of said board at a time named in said notice, and to show cause, in writing, if any they have, why the petition should not be granted. The time specified in the notice at which it shall be required to show cause shall be the regular meeting of the board next after the expiration of the time for the publication of the notice. The petitioner or petitioners, shall advance to the secretary sufficient money to pay the estimated cost of all proceedings under such petition before the secretary shall be required to give such notice.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 36; C.S. 1929, § 73-137; 1941 Comp., § 77-2226; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-26.

### **73-10-29. [Hearing on petition for including lands.]**

The board of directors, at the time and place mentioned in said notice, or at such time or times to which the hearing of such petition may adjourn, shall proceed to hear the petition, and all objections thereto, presented in writing by any person, showing cause as aforesaid, why said petition should not be granted. The failure of any person interested to show cause, in writing, as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken as an assent on his part to the inclusion of such lands in said district as prayed for in said petition.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 37; C.S. 1929, § 73-138; 1941 Comp., § 77-2227; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-27.



### **73-10-30. [Payment of assessments as condition precedent to granting petition for including lands.]**

The board of directors, to whom such petition is presented, may require as a condition precedent to the granting of the same, that the petitioners shall severally pay to such district such respective sums, as nearly as the same can be estimated by the board, as said petitioners or their grantors would have been required to pay to such district as assessment for the payment of their pro rata share of all bonds and interest thereon, which may have previously thereto been issued by said district, or for the payment of the pro rata share of the cost of construction under any contract between the district and the United States accompanying which bonds of the district have not been deposited with the United States as in this act provided, had such lands been included in such district at the time the same was originally formed or when said bonds were so issued, or when said contract with the United States was made; provided, that in case unentered public land is proposed to be annexed to the district the board of directors of the district instead of requiring such payment as a condition precedent, may assess such charges against such unentered public land upon the records of the district to be collected in the manner authorized by the said act of congress of August 11, 1916.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 38; C.S. 1929, § 73-139; 1941 Comp., § 77-2228; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-28.

### **73-10-31. [Order granting or rejecting petition for including lands; description of boundaries; protest of electors.]**

The board of directors if they deem it not for the best interests of the district to include therein the lands mentioned in the petition, shall by order reject the said petition, but if they deem it for the best interests of the district that said lands be included the board may order that the district be so changed as to include therein the lands mentioned in the said petition. The order shall describe the entire boundaries of the district with the lands so included, if the district boundaries be changed thereby, and for that purpose the board may cause a survey to be made of such portion of such boundaries as may be deemed necessary; provided, if within thirty days from the making of such order a majority of the qualified electors of the district protest in writing to said board against the inclusion of such lands in said district, said order shall be held for naught and said lands shall not be included therein.

Provided, further, that in case contract has been made between the district and the United States as in Section 13 [73-10-16 NMSA 1978] hereof provided, no change shall be made in the boundaries of the district and the board of directors shall make no order changing the boundaries of the district until the secretary of the interior shall assent thereto in writing and such assent be filed with the board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 39; C.S. 1929, § 73-140; 1941 Comp., § 77-2229; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-29.

### **73-10-32. [Filing of order and new plat when land is added; status of district; liability of lands.]**

Upon the allowance of such petition and in case no protest has been filed with the board within thirty days after the entry of said order as aforesaid, a certified copy of the order of the board of directors making such change, and a plat of such district, showing such change, if any, certified by the president and secretary, shall be filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which are situate any of the lands of the district, and the district shall remain an irrigation district, as fully as to every intent and purpose as if the lands which are included in the district by the change of the boundaries as aforesaid, had been included therein at the organization of the district; and said district as so changed and all the lands therein shall be liable for all existing obligations and indebtedness of the organized district.

Provided, that in case contract has been made between the district and the United States as in Section 13 [73-10-16 NMSA 1978] hereof provided, no change shall be made in the boundaries of the district until the secretary of the interior shall assent thereto in writing and such assent be filed with the board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 40; C.S. 1929, § 73-141; 1941 Comp., § 77-2230; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-30.

### **73-10-33. [Petition for including land to be recorded in minutes of board; evidential value.]**

Upon the filing of the copies of the order and the plat, as in the last preceding section [73-10-32 NMSA 1978] mentioned, the secretary shall record in the minutes of the board the petition aforesaid; and the said minutes, or a certified copy thereof, shall be admissible in evidence with the same effect as the petition.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 41; C.S. 1929, § 73-142; 1941 Comp., § 77-2231; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-31.

### **73-10-34. Authorization to sign petition or protest.**

A guardian, conservator or personal representative of an estate, who is appointed as such under the laws of this state, and who, as such guardian, conservator or personal representative, is entitled to the possession of the lands belonging to the estate which he represents, may on behalf of his ward or the estate which he represents, upon being thereunto authorized by the proper court, sign and acknowledge the petition in this act mentioned, and may show cause, as in this act mentioned, why the boundaries of the district should not be changed.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 42; C.S. 1929, § 73-143; 1941 Comp., § 77-2232; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-32; Laws 1975, ch. 257, § 8-130.

### **73-10-35. [Redivision of district after addition of lands; election of directors.]**

In the case of the inclusion of any land within any district by proceedings under this act, the board of directors shall, at least thirty days prior to the next succeeding general election, make an order redividing such district into divisions, as nearly equal in size as may be practicable, being in number as in Section 5 [73-10-5 NMSA 1978] of this act provided and which shall be numbered consecutively, and one director shall thereafter be elected from each division. For the purposes of election the board of directors shall establish a convenient number of election precincts in said district, and define the boundaries thereof, which said precincts may be changed from time to time as the board may deem necessary.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 43; C.S. 1929, § 73-144; 1941 Comp., § 77-2233; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-33.

### **73-10-36. [Exclusion of lands; status of district unaffected.]**

Any tract of land included within the boundaries of any such district, at or after its organization under the provisions of this act, may be excluded therefrom, in the manner herein prescribed, but such exclusion of land from the district shall not impair or affect its organization, or its rights in or to property or any of its rights or privileges of whatever kind or nature; nor shall such exclusion affect, impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge for or upon which it would or might become liable or chargeable, had such land not been excluded from the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 44; C.S. 1929, § 73-145; 1941 Comp., § 77-2234; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-34.

### **73-10-37. [Petition to exclude lands; description of lands; acknowledgment.]**

The owner or owners in fee of any lands constituting a portion of any irrigation district may file with the board of directors of the district, a petition praying that such lands may be excluded and taken from said district. The petition shall describe the lands which the petitioners desire to have excluded, but the description of such lands need not be more particular than required when lands are entered in the assessment book by the county assessor. Such petition must be acknowledged in the same manner and form as is required in case of a conveyance of land.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 45; C.S. 1929, § 73-146; 1941 Comp., § 77-2235; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-35.

### **73-10-38. [Notice of petition to exclude lands; publication; estimated costs of proceedings.]**

The secretary of the board of directors shall cause a notice of the filing of such petition to be published for at least three weeks in some newspaper published in the county where the office of the board of directors is situated, and if any portion of said district lie within another county or counties, then said notice shall be so published in a newspaper published within each of said counties; or if no newspaper be published therein, then by posting such notice for the same time in at least three public places in said district, and in case of the posting of said notices, one of the said notices must be so posted on the lands proposed to be excluded. The notice shall state the filing of such petition, the names of the petitioners, description of the lands mentioned in said petition and the prayer of said petitioners; and it shall notify all persons interested to appear at the office of said board at a time named in said notice, and show cause in writing, if any they have, why said petition should not be granted. The time to be specified in the notice at which they shall be required to show cause shall be the regular meeting of the board next after the expiration of the time for the publication of the notice. The petitioner or petitioners shall advance to the secretary sufficient money to pay the estimated cost of all proceedings under the petition before the secretary shall give such notice.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 46; C.S. 1929, § 73-147; 1941 Comp., § 77-2236; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-36.

### **73-10-39. [Hearing on petition for excluding lands; objections.]**

The board of directors at the time and place mentioned in the notice, or at the time or times to which the hearing of said petition may be adjourned, shall proceed to hear the petition and all objections thereto, presented in writing by any persons, showing cause as aforesaid why the prayer of said petition should not be granted. The filing of such petition with the board, as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken as an assent by each and all of such petitioners to the exclusion from such district of the lands mentioned in the petition, or any part thereof.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 47; C.S. 1929, § 73-148; 1941 Comp., § 77-2237; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-37.

### **73-10-40. [Order granting or denying petition for excluding land; protest of electors.]**

The board of directors, if they deem it not for the best interest of the district that the lands mentioned in the petition or some portion thereof, should be excluded from said district, shall order that said petition be denied; but if they deem it for the best interest of the district that the lands mentioned in the petition, or some portion thereof, be excluded from the district, and if there are no outstanding bonds of the district, then the board may order the lands mentioned in the pettiion [petition], or some defined portion thereof, to be excluded from the district; provided, if within thirty days from the making of such order a majority of the qualified electors of the district protest in writing to said board against the exclusion of such lands from said district, said order shall be held for naught and such lands shall not be excluded therefrom.

Provided, further, that in case contract has been made between the district and the United States as in Section 13 [73-10-16 NMSA 1978] hereof provided, no change shall be made in the boundaries of the district, and the board of directors shall make no order changing the boundaries of the district until the secretary of the interior shall assent thereto in writing and such assent shall be filed with the board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 48; C.S. 1929, § 73-149; 1941 Comp., § 77-2238; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-38.

### **73-10-41. [Petition for exclusion of land approved; filing order and new plat.]**

Upon the allowance of such petition and in case no protest has been filed with the board within thirty days after the entry of said order as aforesaid, a certified copy of the order of the board of directors making such change and a plat of such district showing such change, certified by the president and secretary, shall be filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which are situated any of the lands of the district, and the district shall remain an irrigation district as fully to every intent and purpose as if the lands which are excluded by the change of the boundary as aforesaid, had not been excluded therefrom. And, provided, further, that in case contract has been made between the district and the United States as in Section 13 [73-10-16 NMSA 1978] of this act provided, no change shall be made in the boundaries of the district, and the board of directors shall make no order changing the boundaries of the district until the secretary of the interior shall assent thereto in writing and such assent be filed with the board of directors. Upon the filing of such assent, however, the lands excluded from any such district shall be discharged of all liens in favor of the United States under any contract with the United States or under bonds deposited with its agents.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 49; C.S. 1929, § 73-150; 1941 Comp., § 77-2239; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-39.

### **73-10-42. [Redivision of district after exclusion of lands; election of directors.]**

At least thirty days before the next general election of such district the board of directors thereof may make an order, dividing said district into divisions, as nearly equal in size as practicable, being in number as in Section 5 [73-10-5 NMSA 1978] of this act provided and which shall be numbered consecutively, and one director shall be elected for each division by the qualified electors of the whole district. For the purpose of election in such district the said board of directors must establish a convenient number of election precincts and define the boundaries thereof, which said precincts may be changed from time to time, as the board of directors may deem necessary.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 50; C.S. 1929, § 73-151; 1941 Comp., § 77-2240; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-40.

### **73-10-43. [Petition for dissolution of district; notice of election; ballots.]**

Whenever a majority of the resident freeholders, representing a majority of the number of acres of irrigable land, in any irrigation district organized or hereafter to be organized, under this act, shall petition the board of directors to call a special election for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of said irrigation district a proposition to vote on the dissolution of said irrigation district, setting forth in said petition that all bills and claims of every nature whatsoever have been fully satisfied and paid, it shall be the duty of said directors, if they shall be satisfied that all bills and claims have been fully satisfied, to call an election, setting forth the object of the said election, and to cause notice of said election to be published in some newspaper in each of the counties or county in which said district is located, for a period of thirty (30) days prior to said election, setting forth the time and place for holding said election in each of the voting precincts in said district. It shall also be the duty of the directors to prepare ballots to be used at said election on which shall be written or printed the words: "For Dissolution - Yes," and "For Dissolution - No."

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 51; C.S. 1929, § 73-152; 1941 Comp., § 77-2241; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-41.

### **73-10-44. [Canvass of votes on dissolution; certificate of election; recording; assent of secretary of interior.]**

The board of directors shall name a day for canvassing the vote, and if it shall appear that a majority of the ballots contain the words, "For Dissolution - Yes," then it shall be the duty of said board of directors to declare said district to be disorganized, and they shall certify such fact to the county clerk of the respective counties in which the district is situated, stating the number of signers to the petition; that said election was called and set for the . . . . . day of . . . . . month of . . . . . year; that said election was held and that so many votes (stating the number) had been cast for, and that so many votes (stating the number) had been cast against, said proposition. Said certificate shall bear the seal of the district, and the signatures of the president and secretary of said board of directors. It shall be the duty of the said respective clerks to record all such certificates in the records of the respective counties. Should it appear that a majority of the votes cast at said election were "For Dissolution - No," then the board of directors shall declare the proposition lost and shall cause the result and the vote to be made a part of the records of said irrigation district.

Provided, however, that no dissolution shall be made of the district, and the board of directors shall make no order dissolving the same until the secretary of the interior shall assent thereto in writing and such assent be filed with the board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 52; C.S. 1929, § 73-153; 1941 Comp., § 77-2242; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-42.

### **73-10-45. [Succession of irrigation districts to rights and duties of water users' associations.]**

That any irrigation district organized and existing under and by virtue of Chapter 20, Session Laws of New Mexico 1919, may succeed to all the rights, assets, privileges and immunities, and assume all the obligations, duties and liabilities of any water users' association organized and existing under the laws of New Mexico, by conveyance and simple contract; and any election heretofore or hereafter called and held at which a majority of the members or stockholders of such association voting at such election shall favor or shall have favored such succession and assumption, shall be sufficient authority for the directors of such district and of such association to execute and put into effect such conveyances and such contracts; and no action or defense drawing in question, directly or indirectly, the validity or effectiveness of such transfer, succession or assumption, shall be brought, maintained or set up except within one year from and after the filing for record of any such contract, transfer or conveyance; and in case of any such contract, transfer or conveyance, the same shall be filed for record in the office of the county clerk of the county where the principal office of such association is situate, and where the principal office of such district is situate and also in each county where the real estate is situate belonging to either such district or association.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 23; C.S. 1929, § 73-177; 1941 Comp., § 77-2243; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-43.

### **73-10-46. [Irrigation district organized to cooperate with United States; civil service board; employees.]**

Any irrigation district organized or to be organized for the purpose of cooperating with the government of the United States under the terms of federal reclamation law, and other federal laws operating and maintaining its irrigation, drainage, storage and protection works, and storing and distributing water, and for operating and maintaining works for the generation, control and distribution of electrical energy is hereby authorized to institute and maintain a system of civil service employment for such classes of its employees as in the opinion of the board of directors of said district should be placed under such system. The boards of directors are also authorized to enact any and all rules and regulations which may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act [73-10-46, 73-10-47 NMSA 1978] including the appointment of a civil service board consisting of three members to serve three years, two members being permanent employees of the district and one a member of the board. To this civil service board the board of directors shall delegate the duties of establishing grades and of setting up standards of employment, of conducting examinations, creating a roster of approved applicants and in general to exercise advisory powers in the hiring and dismissal of employees. It shall be understood that the purpose of this act in general is to permit said district to create conditions of employment in which tenure of service is dependent upon efficiency, loyalty and dependability. This act shall be applied to all permanent employees at or below the grade of superintendent, and above and not including the

grade of common laborer, but including the fiscal officer of the district who may be assessor-collector treasurer of the district as appointed by the board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 78, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2244; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-44.

### **73-10-47. [Employees' pensions; group insurance; employers' liability insurance.]**

Any irrigation district is authorized to create out of its general funds a fund to pension old or incapacitated employees, to make reasonable reservations out of wages and salaries of employees for creation, augmentation or support of such a fund and to provide out of its general fund or any other fund created for such purpose, the premiums for group insurance or for employers' liability insurance now required by the laws of New Mexico or which hereafter may be required by said laws.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 78, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2245; 1953 Comp., § 75-23-45.

### **73-10-48. Special water users' associations; lease of allotments of irrigation district water; change of place and purpose of use of leased water rights; change of point of diversion of water rights; approval process.**

A. As used in this section:

(1) "annual allotment of project water" means that portion of the pro rata share of water, determined by the irrigation district to be available to assessed acreage within the district each year, for which an adjudication subfile order has been entered or an offer of judgment has been irrevocably accepted by the landowner and the state;

(2) "irrigation district" means an irrigation district organized pursuant to Chapter 73, Article 10 NMSA 1978; and

(3) "public utility" means a utility that supplies water to municipalities or counties.

B. A municipality, county, state university, member-owned community water system or public utility within New Mexico may establish a "special water users' association" to lease the use of water from landowners in an irrigation district if:

(1) the municipality, county, state university, member-owned community water system or public utility supplies or proposes to supply water for municipal and industrial uses, at least a portion of which is supplied to persons within the boundaries of an irrigation district; and



(2) the irrigation district and the state engineer approve of the establishment of the association.

C. The interstate stream commission may establish a special water users' association with the approval of the irrigation district.

D. A special water users' association may lease the use of the annual allotment of project water directly from a member of the irrigation district or through the irrigation district. The association shall appear as record owner of lands from which water is leased during the term of the lease on the irrigation district's assessment rolls for the purpose of irrigation district annual assessments, levies, tolls, charges and other fees for annual allotments of project water leased by the association, which shall be paid by the association to the irrigation district during the term of the lease.

E. The irrigation district may:

(1) consolidate assessments of district members leasing to a special water users' association and assess the association for the total assessed acreage of those district members;

(2) coordinate the delivery of leased annual allotments of project water to the association;

(3) make assessments and levies on lands with appurtenant water rights within the association;

(4) charge reasonable administrative fees to the association; and

(5) adopt rules to carry out the provisions of this section.

F. An irrigation district may approve a lease of an annual allotment of project water by a special water users' association for:

(1) a change in the place of use or point of diversion of the leased water within or without the boundaries of the district; or

(2) a change in the purpose of use of the leased water within or without the boundaries of the district for:

(a) a water treatment plant to supply water for municipal and industrial uses;  
or

(b) the purpose of meeting interstate compact delivery requirements of project water to Texas.

G. The state engineer shall adopt rules establishing criteria governing changes in place or purpose of use or point of diversion of annual allotments of project water for determining the areas of use and purposes of use of water leased by a special water users' association. The rules shall ensure that the proposed changes will be a beneficial use, will not result in an increase in net depletions of water, will not impair existing water rights, are not contrary to the conservation of water within the state and are not detrimental to the public welfare of the state.

H. The special water users' association shall submit to the state engineer on a form prescribed by the state engineer all information required to determine whether the association and its proposed changes in place and purpose of use and point of diversion of water are in compliance with the state engineer's rules. If the state engineer determines that the proposed changes are in conformity with the rules, the association shall be notified and the state engineer shall publish, in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the changes are located at least once a week for three consecutive weeks, the application and notice that the proposed changes in place and purpose of use and point of diversion conform to the state engineer's rules. Objections by a person owning water rights within the district's boundaries and whose water rights may be impaired by the state engineer's decision may be filed with the state engineer and served by certified mail within ten days after the last publication of the notice. The state engineer shall issue a decision in answer to an objection within thirty days of the filing of the objection. The protestant may appeal that decision directly to the district court within thirty days of notice by certified mail of the state engineer's decision. Appeals to the district court shall be limited to review of whether the state engineer's decision was made in accordance with the rules, and a jury trial shall not be allowed. Once the state engineer's approval of the application is final, the irrigation district may then approve the changes authorized in Subsection F of this section pursuant to the irrigation district approval process described in Subsection I of this section.

I. The board of directors of the irrigation district shall publish notice at least once a week for three consecutive weeks, in a newspaper of general circulation published within the county where the office of the irrigation district is located, of the board's intention to consider a resolution to allow the lease of the use of annual allotments of project water. The notice shall indicate the owners and location of lands from which annual allotments of project water will be leased and any change in point of diversion, place or purpose of use of that water and the period of the lease. The board may approve the lease if it finds it to be in the best interest of the district. Members of the district whose water rights may be affected by the lease may protest at the meeting at which the resolution is being considered. The board shall take formal action upon the resolution and shall give notice to all protestants of the board's decision. A protestant may appeal to the district court from any action taken by the board upon the resolution. An appeal shall be filed with the court and notice served on the parties within ten days of receipt of notice of the board's adoption or rejection of the resolution. The appeal shall be on the record of the hearing before the irrigation district board and a right of trial by jury shall not be allowed.

**History:** 1978 Comp., § 73-10-48, enacted by Laws 2003, ch. 369, § 5.

### **73-10-49. Special water users' association; certificate of organization.**

The organizers of a special water users' association shall execute and file with the state engineer a certificate setting forth:

A. the name of the association; provided that a name shall not be assumed that is in use by another association or corporation in this state, or that is so nearly similar as to lead to uncertainty or confusion;

B. the names of the entities forming the association;

C. the location of the association's principal office in this state, the name and address of its registered agent, the county or counties in which it will operate and a general description of the areas it will serve;

D. the purposes of the association and the purposes of the use of water leased by the association;

E. the plan for providing funds or means for the acquisition, construction, improvement and maintenance of its works and for its necessary expenses;

F. the period of duration of the association;

G. the number of and manner of selecting the board of directors, trustees or governing board of the association, and the name of the persons who shall serve as such until their successors are selected;

H. the name of the irrigation district from which the association will be leasing the use of water; and

I. any provision, not inconsistent with the laws of this state, that the organizers may choose to insert for the regulation and conduct of the business and affairs of the association, for enlarging or changing the scope of its operations, for collecting the necessary funds for expenses and purposes of the association, for defining or limiting its powers and for its dissolution and the distribution or other disposition of its property.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 369, § 6.

### **73-10-50. Special water users' association; organizational status; officers.**

A. Upon the filing of the certificate of organization, by duly adopted resolution, with the state engineer and a copy with the county clerk of the county or city, as appropriate, where the special water users' association is formed, the entities so associating shall constitute a body corporate by the name set forth in the certificate and by that name may sue and be sued and shall have the capacity to make contracts; acquire, hold, enjoy, dispose of and convey property real and personal; and do any other act or thing necessary or proper for carrying out the purposes of the association.

B. An association may have officers or agents chosen or appointed in a manner and for terms as may be provided by the bylaws. Vacancies occurring among officers or among the board of directors, trustees or governing board shall be filled as provided by the bylaws or, in the absence of such provision, by the directors, trustees or governing board.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 369, § 7.

## **ARTICLE 11**

### **Irrigation Districts Cooperating with United States Under Reclamation Laws; Fiscal Affairs; Local Improvements and Special Powers**

#### **73-11-1. Special election for bond issue or contract; notice; ballots; bond terms and form; record of bonds; priority of issues.**

For the purpose of constructing or purchasing or acquiring necessary reservoir sites, reservoirs, water rights, canals, ditches and works and acquiring the necessary property and rights therefor, for the assumption of indebtedness to the United States for district lands, for the purpose of paying the first year's interest upon the bonds herein authorized, and for otherwise carrying out the provisions of this act, the board of directors of any such district shall, as soon after the district has been organized as may be practicable, estimate and determine the amount of money necessary to be raised or amount of indebtedness necessary to be assumed for such purposes and shall forthwith call a special election, at which election shall be submitted to the electors of the district possessing the qualifications prescribed by this act the question of whether or not the bonds of the district shall be issued in the amount so determined or whether or not a contract shall be entered into with the United States as herein provided. A notice of such election must be given by posting notices in three public places in each election precinct in the district for at least twenty days and also by publication of such notice in some newspaper of general circulation published in each county wherein is situate any lands within the district once each week for at least four successive weeks. Such notice shall specify the time of holding the election and the amount of bonds proposed to be issued. The election must be held and the result thereof determined and declared in all respects as nearly as possible in conformity with the provisions of this act; provided that no informalities in conducting the election shall invalidate it if the election has been

otherwise fairly conducted. At such election, the ballots shall contain the words "Bonds - Yes" and "Bonds - No," or "Contract - Yes" and "Contract - No," or words equivalent thereto. If any such election shall carry in conformity with the provisions of this act, the board of directors shall immediately cause bonds in such amounts to be issued or contract made with the United States. If bonds are not to be deposited with the United States in connection with such contract, bonds need not be issued; or if required for the construction fund in addition to such contract, bonds shall be issued only for the amounts needed in addition to such contract; bonds, other than those deposited with the United States, when required, shall be issued and payable in series as follows.

At the expiration of eleven years, not less than five percent of the whole amount and number of the bonds; at the expiration of twelve years, not less than six percent of the whole amount and number of the bonds; at the expiration of thirteen years, not less than seven percent of the whole amount and number of the bonds; at the expiration of fourteen years, not less than eight percent of the whole amount and number of the bonds; at the expiration of fifteen years, not less than nine percent of the whole amount and number of of the bonds; at the expiration of sixteen years, not less than ten percent of the whole amount and number of the bonds; at the expiration of seventeen years, not less than eleven percent of the whole amount and number of the bonds; at the expiration of eighteen years, not less than thirteen percent of the whole amount and number of the bonds; at the expiration of nineteen years, not less than fifteen percent of the whole amount and number of the bonds; at the expiration of twenty years, a percentage sufficient to pay off the remainder of the bonds, that the several enumerated percentages be of the entire amount of the bond issue; that each bond must be payable at the given time for its entire amount and not for a percentage; that the bonds shall bear interest payable semiannually on June 1 and December 1 of each year. The principal and interest shall be payable at the office of the county treasurer of the county in which the organization of the district was effected as aforesaid and at such other place or places, if any, as the board of directors may designate in the bond. The bonds shall be in such form as the board of directors may determine and, except for bonds issued in book entry or similar form without the delivery of physical securities, shall be executed in the name of the district and signed by the president and secretary, and the seal of the district shall be affixed thereto. Provided that bonds deposited with the United States may be of the denominations and may call for the repayment of the principal at the times agreed upon between the board and the secretary of the interior, and where contract is made and bonds are not deposited with the United States, a contract may likewise call for the repayment of principal at such times as may be agreed upon. The bonds shall be numbered consecutively as issued and bear date at the time of their issue. Any coupons for interest shall be attached to each bond bearing the facsimile signatures of the president and the secretary. The bonds shall express on their face that they are issued by the authority of this act, stating its title and date of approval. The secretary shall keep a record of the bonds sold, their number, date of sale, the price received and the name of the purchaser; provided, any such district may, in the manner whereby the issuance of bonds may be authorized, provide for the issuance of bonds that will mature in any number of years less than twenty and arrange for the payment thereof, in series as above provided; provided further that when the money

provided by any previous issue of bonds has become exhausted by expenditures herein authorized therefor and it becomes necessary to raise additional money for such purposes, additional bonds may be issued after submitting the question to the qualified voters of the district, as for an original issue of such bonds. Provided, also, the lien for the bonds of any issue shall be a preferred lien to that of any subsequent issue, and the lien for all payments due or to become due under any contract with the United States, accompanying which bonds of the district have not been deposited with the United States as in Section 73-10-16 NMSA 1978 provided, shall be a preferred lien to any issue of bonds subsequent to the date of such contract.

If a contract is proposed to be made with the United States and bonds are not to be deposited with the United States in connection therewith, the question to be submitted to the voters at such special election shall be whether a contract shall be entered into with the United States. The notice of election shall state the maximum amount of money payable to the United States for construction purposes exclusive of penalties and interest.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 17; C.S. 1929, § 73-118; 1941 Comp., § 77-2301; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-1; 1983, ch. 265, § 56.

### **73-11-2. [Sale of bonds; notice; bids; rejection of bids; use of bonds.]**

The board may sell bonds from time to time in such quantities as may be necessary and most advantageous to raise the money for the construction or purchase of canals, reservoir sites, reservoirs, water rights and works, and otherwise to fully carry out the objects and purposes of this act. Before making any sale the board shall, at a meeting, by resolution declare its intention to sell a specified amount of the bonds and the day and hour and place of such sale, and shall cause such resolution to be entered in the minutes and notice of the sale to be given by publication thereof by three insertions thereof at least twenty days prior to such sale in a daily newspaper published in the city of Santa Fe and a like notice in a daily newspaper published in the city of Albuquerque, and any other newspaper at their discretion. The notice shall state that sealed proposals will be received by the board at their office, for the purchase of the bonds, till the day and hour named in the resolution. At the time appointed the board shall open the proposals and award the purchase of the bonds to the highest responsible bidder and may reject all bids; but said board shall, in no event, sell any of said bonds for less than ninety-five percent of the face value thereof. In case no bid is made and accepted as provided in this act, the board of directors is hereby authorized to use said bonds for the purchase of canals, reservoir sites, reservoirs, water rights and works, or for the construction of any canal, reservoir and works; provided, such bonds shall not be so disposed of at less than ninety-five percent of the face value thereof.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 18; C.S. 1929, § 73-119; 1941 Comp., § 77-2302; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-2.

### **73-11-3. [Special election to authorize sale of bonds at less than ninety-five percent par value.]**

If any irrigation district bonds have been authorized and the board of directors of said district deem it as desirable that the said board be authorized to sell said bonds for less than ninety-five percent of the par value thereof, said board may call a special election to submit to the voters of the district said proposition. Such election shall be held, and notice thereof shall be given in the same manner as is provided in the case of a special election to authorize the issuance of bonds for irrigation districts. The proposition shall be stated in substantially the following form: "Shall the board of directors of . . . . . irrigation district be authorized to sell bonds of the district for less than ninety-five percent of the par value thereof, but not less than . . . . . percent of the par value?" (Stating the minimum price), followed by the word "yes" or "no," as provided in Section 6 [73-10-6 NMSA 1978] of said Chapter 20. If at least two-thirds of the legal votes cast at such election are for "yes," then the board of directors may sell any such bonds to the highest responsible bidder, at or above the minimum price authorized at such election.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 73-163; 1941 Comp., § 77-2303; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-3.

### **73-11-4. [Payment of bonds and debt due United States; taxation.]**

Said bonds and interest thereon, and all payments due or to become due the ensuing year to the United States under any contract between the district and the United States, accompanying which bonds of the district have not been deposited with the United States shall be paid, by revenue derived from an annual assessment upon the real property of the district, and the real property of the district shall be made and remain liable to be assessed for such payments as herein provided. Public lands of the United States within any district shall be subject to taxation for all purposes of this chapter to the extent provided by the act of congress approved August 11, 1916, upon full compliance therewith by the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 19; C.S. 1929, § 73-120; 1941 Comp., § 77-2304; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-4.

### **73-11-5. [Payment of bonds; interest after default; excess money in bond fund; redemption of bonds; investment of funds.]**

Upon presentation of any matured bond, or any matured interest coupon of any bond of the district, the treasurer shall pay the same from the bond fund. If funds are not available for the payment of any such matured bonds or interest coupons, both such shall draw interest at the rate of seven percent per annum from the date of presentation for payment until notice is given that funds are available for payment. Whenever the bond fund or sinking fund created for retirement of bonds contains ten thousand dollars

(\$10,000.00) in excess of the amount necessary to pay all bonds and interest coupons of the district that have matured or that will mature before the time when any part of the next annual assessment, to be levied in the district, will become delinquent, the board of directors may advertise, in the manner hereinbefore [hereinbefore] provided for the sale of bonds, for the receipt of sealed proposals for the delivery to the district for redemption of any of its bonds not due. Said advertisement shall state the amount which may be used for the redemption of such bonds. Any such proposals shall be opened by the board in open meeting at the time named in said advertisement, and the offer or offers of such bonds at the lowest rate or rates shall be accepted; provided, that no bonds shall be redeemed at more than par value thereof, except by unanimous vote of the directors. In case two or more proposals are equal, and there is not sufficient money available to accept them all, the lowest numbered bonds shall have the preference. In case not enough bonds are offered for redemption at prices which the board of directors accepts, the board may invest any money available for redemption of bonds in bonds of the United States, or bonds approved for the investment of state school funds, and shall hold the bonds so purchased as part of the bond fund until such time as the board may determine that it is for the best interests of the district that such bonds, or any of them, be sold. In case of the sale of any such bonds the proceeds of the sale shall be deposited in the bond fund. The county treasurer, insofar as the redemption of unmatured bonds are [is] concerned, or the investment of any excess in the bond fund shall act under the order of the board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 73-164; 1941 Comp., § 77-2305; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-5.

### **73-11-6. [Proceedings to determine validity; bond issue or contract with United States; ascertainment of benefits and damages; inclusion or exclusion of land.]**

The board of directors of any irrigation district organized under the provisions of this act shall commence special proceedings in and by which the proceedings of said board and of said district providing for and authorizing the issue and sale of the bonds of said district, whether said bonds or any of them have or have not been sold or disposed of, or in and by which the proceedings of said board and of said district providing for the authorization of contract with the United States may be judicially examined, approved and confirmed. Such proceedings shall be brought within sixty days after the adoption of resolution by the board declaring that the bond election or election for the authorization of the execution of contract with the United States has been voted upon favorably by the electorate of the district. The board may, however, in its discretion, bring an action prior to the time specified, whereby the validity of the organization of the district or of any steps leading to the issuance of bonds or to the making of contract as aforesaid, may be separately judicially examined, approved and confirmed. Within sixty days after the ascertainment of the rate or percentage of drainage benefits, and of the award for damages inflicted by drainage works, as in this act provided, the board shall bring a similar special proceeding, whereby such assessment and award may be judicially examined, approved and confirmed. In the event of the inclusion by any irrigation district



of additional lands, or the exclusion of lands previously within the boundaries of any such district, the board of directors may, if they deem it advisable so to do, institute a special proceeding in like manner and with like effect as herein provided for the confirmation of bonds, whereby the proceedings for such change of boundaries may be judicially examined, approved and confirmed.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 53; C.S. 1929, § 73-154; 1941 Comp., § 77-2306; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-6.

### **73-11-7. [Petition to determine validity of proceedings; contents.]**

The board of directors of the irrigation district shall file in the district court of the county in which the lands of the district, or some portion thereof, are situated, a petition praying, in effect, that the proceedings aforesaid may be examined, approved and confirmed by the court. The petition shall state the facts showing the proceedings had for the issue and sale of bonds, or for the authorization of contract with the United States or for the determination of the rate of drainage benefits and award of damages, as the case may be, and shall state generally that the irrigation district was duly organized, and that the first board of directors was duly elected, but the petition need not state the facts showing such organization of the district or the election of said first board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 54; C.S. 1929, § 73-155; 1941 Comp., § 77-2307; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-7.

### **73-11-8. [Time of hearing; notice; publication; contents.]**

The court shall fix the time for the hearing of said petition and shall order the clerk of the court to give and publish a notice of the filing of such petition. The notice shall be given and published once each week for four consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation published in each county wherein shall be situate any lands within the district. The notice shall state the time and place fixed for the hearing of the petition and the prayer of the petitioners, and that any person interested in the organization of said district or in the proceedings for the issue or sale of said bonds, or in any such other proceedings as may be in question, may, on or before the day fixed for the hearing of said petition, demur to or answer said petition. The petition may be referred to and described in said notice as the petition of the board of directors of . . . . . irrigation district (giving its name), praying that the proceedings for the issue and sale of said bonds of said district, or that the proceedings for the authorization of contract with the United States or the validity of the determination of the rate of drainage benefits and of the award of damages, as the cases may be respectively, may be examined, approved and confirmed by the court.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 55; C.S. 1929, § 73-156; 1941 Comp., § 77-2308; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-8.

### **73-11-9. [Procedure; pleading; appeals.]**

Any person interested in said district or in the issue or sale of said bonds, or in such other proceedings as may be in issue as herein provided, may demur to or answer said petition. The provisions of Chapter LXXXVIII respecting the demurrer and answer to a verified complaint shall be applicable to a demurrer and answer to said petition. The person so demurring and answering said petition shall be the defendant to the special proceedings and the board of directors shall be the plaintiff. Every material statement of the petition not specifically controverted by the answer shall, for the purpose of said special proceedings, be taken as true, and each person failing to answer the petition shall be deemed to admit as true all the material statements of the petition. The rules of pleading and practice relating to appeals and writs of error as provided by Chapter 43 Laws of 1917 which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this act are applicable to the special proceedings herein provided for; provided, appeals to the supreme court of the state involving the special proceedings herein mentioned shall be taken within twenty days, and shall be perfected within sixty days after the granting of any such appeal.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 56; C.S. 1929, § 73-157; 1941 Comp., § 77-2309; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-9.

### **73-11-10. [Hearing on validation; scope of proceeding; irregularities disregarded; costs; judgment.]**

Upon the hearing of such special proceedings the court shall find and determine whether the notice of the filing of the petition has been duly given and published for the time and in the manner in this act prescribed, and shall have power and jurisdiction to examine and determine the legality and validity of, and approve and confirm, each and all of the proceedings for the organization of said district under the provisions of said act, from and including the petition for the organization of the district, and all other proceedings which may affect the legality or validity of said bonds, and the order of the sale and the sale thereof, and all the proceedings, if any, as the case may be, for the authorization of contract with the United States and the validity of the determination of the rate of drainage benefits and award of damages, which shall have been made pursuant to contract with the United States. The court, in inquiring into the regularity, legality or correctness of said proceedings, must disregard any error, irregularity or omission which does not affect the substantial rights of the parties to said special proceedings; and the court may by decree approve and confirm such proceedings in part, and disapprove and declare illegal or invalid other or subsequent parts of the proceedings. The cost of the special proceedings may be allowed and apportioned between the parties, in the discretion of the court. The judgment when finally made and entered, shall be res judicata in all cases arising in connection with the organization of the district, and the collection of taxes for payment of the principal and interest of bonds or for payment of monies required by contract with the United States and in connection with the award of damages. Provided, however, that a reopening of the judgment upon

the rate of drainage benefits may be had at the petition of the board of directors, upon sufficient cause shown.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 57; C.S. 1929, § 73-158; 1941 Comp., § 77-2310; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-10.

### **73-11-11. [Modification of time and method of payments due United States; modification of assessments.]**

That any irrigation district cooperating with the United States under the federal reclamation laws and other federal laws shall have the power, through its board of directors, to extend the time for payment of any indebtedness due from said district to the United States, and to otherwise change and modify the time and manner of payment and amount to be paid to the extent permitted under the acts of congress and under any rule, regulation or contract of the department of the interior appertaining thereto, and to that end the board of directors of such district may amend or modify any existing contract with the United States, or enter into a new contract, and may change, adjust, readjust or modify the liens, charges and assessments theretofore made against the lands of said district, and may cancel the taxes theretofore levied by said district, including delinquent tax certificates still held by said district and may do any and all things necessary to carry out such amended or new contract, in accordance with such acts of congress.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 15, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2311; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-11.

### **73-11-12. [Determination of benefits and damages; assessments; assessment for drainage costs.]**

If any district shall contract with the United States for the construction of drainage works, it shall be within the powers and the duties of the board of directors on or before September 1 next preceding the initial payment for such works under contract with the United States to fix and determine the rate or percentage of the benefits from the proposed works for all real property within the district to be affected by said works, subject to judicial confirmation as provided by Section 53 [73-11-6 NMSA 1978] of this act. The board shall also assess the damages inflicted upon any real property by the works of the district and such amount shall be deducted from the assessments payable by each owner of lands damaged until compensation for the damages shall have been fully made. If the damage shall be found to exceed the benefits as regards any parcel of real property or any easement, a cash award of the difference shall be made. The said rate of benefits shall be subsequently used as the basis for the annual assessment, but such rate may be changed from time to time by the board of directors as new or changing conditions may, in their judgment, require, subject to judicial confirmation as aforesaid. Irrigation districts, as regards drainage costs, may assess realty within the district boundaries owned by all such classes of persons and corporations, to the same extent as now permitted by the laws of this state to drainage districts.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 20; C.S. 1929, § 73-121; 1941 Comp., § 77-2312; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-12.

### **73-11-13. [Local improvements; petition; bond for costs of investigation; dismissal of petition.]**

Any desired special construction, reconstruction, betterment or improvement in an irrigation system, including drainage (and protection from arroyo floods or encroachment of arroyo fans, river rectification and control, river bank protection, construction of levees and jetties), which are for the special benefit of certain agricultural lands tributary thereto and lying within the geographical boundaries of an irrigation district, may be constructed, or improvements already constructed for similar or the same purposes may be purchased or acquired, and provision made to meet the cost thereof as follows:

the holders of title or evidence of title of one-quarter of the acreage proposed to be assessed may file with the board of directors of the irrigation district their petition reciting the nature and general plan of the desired improvement and specifying the lands proposed to be specially taxed therefor. Such petition shall be accompanied by a bond in the sum of one hundred (\$100) dollars, with the surety to be approved by the said board of directors, conditioned that the petitioners will pay the cost of the investigation of the project and the hearing thereon if the same be not established. Said board may, at any time, require a bond in an additional sum, as may be deemed advisable. Upon the filing of such petition the board of directors, with the assistance of a competent engineer, shall make an investigation of the feasibility, cost and need of the proposed local improvement, together with the ability of the land to pay such costs, and if the same appears feasible they shall have a plan and estimate of the cost thereof prepared. If the cost shall appear to the board to exceed the benefits to accrue therefrom, or if the land proposed to be embraced within the local improvement district shall be found to be insufficient security for the return of the cost, or if a protest against the establishment of the proposed improvement, signed by a majority of the holders of title in the proposed local improvement district, be presented at or prior to the hearing herein provided for, or if in other respects the proposed local improvement district should be found not feasible, they shall hold such petition for organization for naught, and dismiss the same at the expense of the petitioners.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 17; C.S. 1929, § 73-171; Laws 1931, ch. 80, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2313; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-13.

### **73-11-14. [Approval of petition for improvement; notice of hearing; publication; determination.]**

In event that the said board shall approve such petition, the board shall fix the time and place for the hearing thereof, and shall publish a notice in English and Spanish once each week for four successive weeks prior to such hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the county, stating that the lands within certain described

boundaries are proposed to be organized as a local improvement district, stating generally the nature of the proposed improvement; that certificates of indebtedness for such local improvement are proposed to be issued as the obligations of the irrigation district; that the lands within the said local improvement district are to be assessed for such improvement, and the time and place of hearing thereon. At the time and place of hearing named in said notice all persons interested may appear before the board and show cause for or against the formation of the proposed improvement district, and the issuance of certificates of indebtedness aforesaid. Upon the hearing the board shall determine as to the establishment of the proposed local improvement district. Any landowner whose lands can be served, or will be benefited by the proposed improvement, may make application to the board, at the time of hearing to include such lands, and the board of directors, in any such case, may, at their discretion, include such lands within the district. The board of directors may exclude any land specified in said notice from said district, provided that in the judgment of the board the inclusion thereof will not be practicable.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 18; C.S. 1929, § 73-172; 1941 Comp., § 77-2314; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-14.

### **73-11-15. [Local improvement district; establishment; cost of improvement; certificates of indebtedness; inclusion of additional land.]**

If decision shall be rendered in favor of the improvement, the board shall enter an order establishing the boundaries of said improvement district, and shall adopt plans for the proposed improvement and determine the number of annual installments, not exceeding fifteen, in which the cost of said improvement shall be paid. The cost of said improvement shall be paid by the issuance of certificates of indebtedness of the district therefor, from time to time, either directly for the payment of the labor and material, or for the securing of funds for such purpose. Said certificates shall bear interest at a rate not to exceed eight percent per annum, payable semiannually, evidenced by coupons, and shall state upon their face that they are issued as certificates of indebtedness of the irrigation district for the benefit of the local improvement district within said irrigation district; that all lands within said local improvement district shall be primarily liable to assessment for the payment of the principal and interest of said certificates, and that said notes are also a general obligation of the district. No certificate of indebtedness shall be issued in denomination exceeding five hundred (\$500) dollars, and no certificates shall be sold for less than par. Whenever such improvement district has been organized, the boundaries thereof may be enlarged to include other lands which can be served, or will be benefited by the proposed improvements, upon petition of the owners thereof; provided, that at such time the lands so included shall pay their equitable proportion upon the basis of benefits of the investment theretofore made by the said local improvement district, and shall be liable for the indebtedness of the said local improvement district in the same proportion, the same manner, and subject to assessments as if the said lands had been incorporated in said improvement district at the beginning of its organization.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 19; C.S. 1929, § 73-173; 1941 Comp., § 77-2315; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-15.

### **73-11-16. Special assessment of improvement district.**

The cost of said improvement shall be specially assessed against the lands within such improvement district in proportion to the benefits accruing therefrom and shall be levied and collected in the manner provided for the assessments of construction costs.

All provisions contained in this chapter and Chapter 20, Session Laws of 1919, for the assessment, equalization, levy and collection of assessments for irrigation district purposes shall be applicable to assessment for local improvement, except that no election shall be required to authorize said improvement or the expenditure therefor. Assessments, when collected by the district treasurer for the payment of the improvement of any local improvement district and for the maintenance thereof, shall constitute special funds to be called "construction fund of local improvement district no. . . ." and "operation and maintenance fund of local improvement district no. . . ."

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 20; C.S. 1929, § 73-174; Laws 1931, ch. 80, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2316; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-16.

### **73-11-17. [Insufficiency of funds from local improvement district; liability of district at large.]**

In the event of the failure of the lands within the local improvement district to furnish money sufficient for the payment of principal or interest of the certificates of indebtedness for such local improvement work, and in case of a default in the payment of principal and interest, as aforesaid, the amount delinquent shall be paid by the general warrant of the irrigation district at large, but the lands of the local improvement district shall not thereby become released from liability for special assessment therefor. Such certificates of indebtedness, if issued, shall be redeemed as soon as there shall be available for that purpose money in the construction fund of the local improvement district.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 21; C.S. 1929, § 73-175; 1941 Comp., § 77-2317; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-17.

### **73-11-18. [Lands contiguous to municipality; exception from improvement district.]**

All provisions contained in Section 17 as herein amended, Sections 18 and 19 and 21 of Chapter 39 of Session Laws of 1921 and Section 20 [73-11-13 to 73-11-17 NMSA 1978] as herein amended shall be understood and construed as applying to agricultural lands lying wholly outside of the boundaries, and not subject to any of the provisions, of a local improvement district formed for the betterment, improvement or protection of

lands within and contiguous to the corporation [corporate] limits of a municipality and which naturally are or would be included in the local improvement district of such municipality nor shall local improvement districts within the meaning and intent of this act [73-11-13, 73-11-16, 73-11-18 NMSA 1978] be held to cover lands within and contiguous to the corporate limits of a municipality, town or village whether such lands be or may not be agricultural lands subject to or in a state of cultivation but which geographically are so located as to share in the benefits of any improvement or protection works planned or built by the municipality.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 80, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2318; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-18.

### **73-11-19. [Bonds for redemption of certificates of indebtedness; priority of liens.]**

It shall be lawful for any irrigation district, which has issued certificates of indebtedness for said local improvement as in this chapter provided, to issue in place thereof an amount of bonds not in excess of such issue of certificates, and sell the same, or any part thereof, or exchange the same, or any part thereof, with the holders of such previously issued certificates of indebtedness for the purpose of redeeming said certificates; provided, however, that all the provisions of this act and Chapter 20, Session Laws of 1919, regarding the authorization and issue of bonds shall apply; and, provided further, that the issuance of said bonds shall not release the lands of the local improvement district, or districts, from liability for special assessment for the payment thereof; and, provided further, that the lien of any issue of bonds of the district, or indebtedness arising from any contracts with the United States prior, in point of time, to the issue of bonds or certificates of indebtedness herein provided for, shall be deemed a prior lien.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 22; C.S. 1929, § 73-176; 1941 Comp., § 77-2319; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-19.

### **73-11-20. [Contract with United States for local improvement work.]**

Any irrigation district may contract with the United States for local improvement work, and for such purpose may form local improvement districts as herein provided.

Authorization of certificates of indebtedness or of contract with the United States for local improvements may be confirmed in the same manner as in Sections 53 to 57 [73-11-6 to 73-11-10 NMSA 1978], inclusive, of Chapter 20, Session Laws of 1919.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 24; C.S. 1929, § 73-178; 1941 Comp., § 77-2320; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-20.

### **73-11-21. [Electric power plants; acquisition, construction and operation.]**

Any irrigation district heretofore organized or hereafter to be organized under Chapter 20, Session Laws of New Mexico 1919, or any act supplementary thereto or amendatory thereof, may provide for the purchase, acquisition, construction, operation, lease and control of plants for the generation, distribution, sale and lease of electrical energy, including sale to municipalities, corporations, public utility districts or individuals, of electrical power so generated within or without the district; and any such district may use, incidentally in the generation of power, water heretofore appropriated for irrigation purposes by or on behalf of such district or any other district or districts cooperating in the construction, operation and maintenance of irrigation projects or power plants, or both; and subject to the conditions in this section contained, may make special appropriations of water for power purposes, as now authorized by law; provided, however, that any use of water for generating such electrical power or energy at any given time of the year, which use is in excess of the water already appropriated for irrigation purposes by such district, or any other agency in its behalf, at said period of the year, shall be subject to all prior existing appropriations; and the officers, agents and employees of such district shall have the same power, duties and liabilities respecting such power and the construction, repair, maintenance, management and control thereof as they now have, or may hereafter have respecting such irrigation and drainage works. Chapter 20, Session Laws of the state of New Mexico, 1919, shall be so construed, applied and enforced as to apply to such power as well as to such irrigation and drainage works. The board of directors of any irrigation district organized under and by virtue of said act, and all its officers, agents and employees shall do all necessary and proper acts for the construction, repair, maintenance and management of such electrical power works.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 25; C.S. 1929, § 73-179; 1941 Comp., § 77-2321; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-21.

### **73-11-22. [Bonds for electric power plants.]**

In case funds are not otherwise available, any irrigation district organized under the aforesaid act may issue bonds for such purpose, and all of the provisions of the aforesaid act or acts amendatory thereof or supplemental thereto, relating to the issuance of bonds for irrigation purposes, insofar as the same are applicable and not inconsistent with the law, shall apply.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 26; C.S. 1929, § 73-180; 1941 Comp., § 77-2322; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-22.

### **73-11-23. [Election for issuance of bonds; notice; ballots; sale of bonds.]**

The board of directors of any such irrigation district may estimate and determine the amount of money necessary to be raised, or the amount of indebtedness necessary to be assumed for such purpose or purposes, and may include in such amounts a sum sufficient to pay the first four years' interest on such indebtedness, and the said board,



deeming it expedient to issue bonds to provide such funds or provide for such indebtedness, shall forthwith call a special election, at which election shall be submitted to the electorate of such district, possessing the qualifications required by law, the question whether or not the bonds of said district for such purposes as aforesaid shall be issued in the amount so determined. A notice of such election must be given by posting notices in three public places in each election precinct in said district for at least twenty (20) days, and also by publication of such notice in some newspaper of general circulation published in each county wherein there is situate any lands within the district, once each week for at least four consecutive weeks; such notice shall specify the time of holding the election, the amount of bonds proposed to be issued, the purpose thereof, and said election must be held, and the result thereof determined and declared in all respects as nearly as possible, in conformity with the provisions of this and said Chapter 20, Session Laws of 1919, and acts amendatory and supplementary thereto and hereof; provided, that no informalities in conducting such election shall invalidate the same if the election shall be fairly conducted. At such election the ballots shall contain the words "Bonds - Yes," and "Bonds - No," or words equivalent thereto. If such election shall carry in conformity with the provisions of this, and said act, the board of directors shall immediately cause said bonds for such amounts to be issued, and the same may be sold, placed or disposed of at not less than ninety-five per centum of their par value, according, as is now provided in said Chapter 20, Session Laws of 1919 of New Mexico, for the sale and disposal of bonds for irrigation and incidental purposes.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 27; C.S. 1929, § 73-181; 1941 Comp., § 77-2323; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-23.

### **73-11-24. [Term of bonds; interest; redemption; earnings of power plant; sinking fund.]**

Said board of directors, within the limitations herein specified, shall have discretion as to the terms, conditions, interest rate and manner of providing for the refunding of said bonds; such bonds shall run for a period not less than twenty years nor more than forty years, and shall bear interest at not to exceed six percent per annum, which interest shall be payable the first day of October and April of each year. The board, in issuing such bonds, shall have the power to provide for the redemption of such bonds serially, or before maturity by lot, at not more than one hundred and five per centum of par value and accrued interest. Such bonds shall be issued subject to all liens created and existing by reason of bonds previously issued or liens created by any contract with the United States made prior thereto. The earnings of such power plants, after the payment of operating expenses, shall be kept intact for the purposes of paying the interest on said bonds, and with the beginning of the eleventh complete fiscal year after the issuance of said bonds, or sooner if the board so determine, the said board of directors of the said irrigation district shall, for the purpose of retiring such issue of bonds, make and provide suitable sinking funds, which sinking fund shall not be less than one per centum of the total issue of bonds, set aside annually, and shall be invested in the bonds of the district, or such securities as are approved for the

investment of state school funds, in such manner and at such prices, and upon such terms as it, the said board of directors, may deem expedient.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 28; C.S. 1929, § 73-182; 1941 Comp., § 77-2324; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-24.

### **73-11-25. [Security for payment of bonds; earnings of plant insufficient; assessment upon lands.]**

That the net earnings of such power plant, and such plant and all property and property rights connected or used therewith, except property the title to which is vested in the United States pursuant to the act of congress of June 17, 1902 (32 Stat. 388) and acts amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto, shall be and remain as security for the payment of said bonds and the interest thereon; that in the event the net earnings from said power plant are not sufficient to pay said interest and provide for the refunding of said bonds, as hereinbefore provided, then the board of directors of said district shall, by levying annual assessments upon the lands of said district, raise the required funds, and all the real property in the district shall be made and remain liable to be assessed for such payments.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 29; C.S. 1929, § 73-183; 1941 Comp., § 77-2325; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-25.

### **73-11-26. [Proceeding to determine validity of power plant bonds; decision res judicata.]**

The board of directors shall, within sixty days after the adoption of a resolution finding and declaring that the bond election has been voted upon favorably by the electorate of the district, commence special proceedings in the district court in and by which the proceedings of the said board, and of the said district, providing for and authorizing the issue and sale of said bonds of said district, whether said bonds or any of them have or have not been sold or disposed of, shall be judicially examined, approved and confirmed according to the procedure provided in Sections 53 to 57 [73-11-6 through 73-11-10 NMSA 1978], inclusive, of Chapter 20, Session Laws of 1919 of New Mexico; and the final decree in such proceedings shall be res judicate [judicata] of all matters and things which may arise as to the legality and regularity of such issue of bonds and the right to issue same.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 30; C.S. 1929, § 73-184; 1941 Comp., § 77-2326; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-26.

### **73-11-27. Borrowing money; limitation on indebtedness.**

A. To secure money for the operation, maintenance, improvement or betterment of the works of the district or in case of emergency, the board of directors has the power to

borrow money, with interest not exceeding the rate permitted under Section 56-8-11.1 NMSA 1978 [repealed], upon such terms and conditions as deemed for the best interest of the district, not to exceed, however, in the aggregate, fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per acre upon all district lands.

B. The board of directors or other officers of the district have no power to incur any debt or liability whatever, either by issuing bonds or otherwise, except as expressly provided by law, and any debt or liability incurred in excess of such express provision is void.

C. Lease agreements and lease-purchase agreements do not constitute the creation of debt.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 31; 1921, ch. 39, § 6; C.S. 1929, § 73-132; 1941 Comp., § 77-2327; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-27; Laws 1981, ch. 335, § 1; 1995, ch. 199, § 1.

### **73-11-28. [Expenses of district; charge for water; levy of assessments.]**

For the purpose of defraying the expenses of the organization of the district, and the care, operation, management, repair and improvement of all canals, ditches, reservoirs and works, including salaries of officers and employees, or for payment of charges to the United States for the temporary rental of water, the board may either fix rates of tolls and charges and collect the same of all persons using said canal and water for irrigation, or other purposes, and in addition thereto may provide, in whole or in part, for the payment of such expenditures by levy of assessments therefor, as heretofore provided, or by both tolls and assessments; provided, that if any contract be made with the United States the charge for operation and maintenance of the district and for temporary rental of water may be fixed in accordance with the federal laws, notices, rules and regulations and the contract with the district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 28; C.S. 1929, § 73-129; 1941 Comp., § 77-2328; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-28.

### **73-11-29. Application for water; budget meeting of directors; notice of meeting; tax assessments and water charges; exemptions from tax; appeal; succession to rights of water users' association.**

A. Every person desiring to receive water during the course of the year, at the time he applies for water, shall furnish the secretary of the board of directors of the irrigation district a statement in writing of the number of acres intended by him to be irrigated and a statement, as near as may be, of the crops planted or intended to be planted.

B. The board of directors, on a date to be fixed by a standing order of the board, which shall not be later than July 1 of each year, shall estimate and determine the

amount of funds required to meet the obligations and needs of the district for the ensuing year, together with the additional amount as may be necessary to meet any deficiency in the payment of expenses or obligations previously incurred by the district and remaining unpaid, for any of the following purposes that may be required by the activities of the district:

(1) the payment of the interest upon bonds of the district and any installment on the principal of the bonds;

(2) any payment to become due under any contract with the United States, to secure which bonds have not been deposited with the United States, whether for the cost of irrigation or drainage system or for the operation and maintenance, or both; or if the lands of the district have been divided by the secretary of the interior into units, not necessarily contiguous, for repayment purposes the board shall prepare separate estimates for each unit;

(3) the portion of the expenses of operation and maintenance of the irrigation and drainage systems to be collected by tax assessment and levy, including funds required to meet obligations as provided in Section 73-11-49 NMSA 1978. This portion shall not be less than one-half of that portion required for the operation and maintenance costs for the ensuing year and shall be determined by the board of directors of the district from year to year. The portion of the operation and maintenance expenses collected by tax assessment and levy shall be collected from all lands of the district, whether irrigated or not, except those lands as may be exempted from taxation by the terms of Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978, and the same, when collected, shall be applied to the cost of operating and maintaining the irrigation and drainage systems. The remainder of the estimated amount shall be paid by the parties actually using the systems and water for irrigation or other purposes in accordance with the terms of their contract for water; or

(4) current and miscellaneous expense fund requirements, other than as specified in this section, and necessary to defray the expenses of maintaining the organization of the district and carrying out the purposes of Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978, shall be determined annually at a per acre rate by the board of directors. The amounts to be collected pursuant to this paragraph may, at the option of the board of directors of the district, be collected as tolls and charges in the manner provided in Section 73-11-28 NMSA 1978.

C. Lands that, in the opinion of the board of directors, are unfit for cultivation by irrigation on account of seepage, alkali or physical condition and location of the land, or other conditions, or lands to which the existing distributing system or its extensions cannot furnish water at such points of delivery as the board may consider reasonable, shall not be taxed for Paragraph (3) of Subsection B of this section, provided that tax shall not be assessed for Paragraph (3) of Subsection B of this section against land involved in the boundary suit now pending in the United States supreme court between the state of Texas and the state of New Mexico until the final determination of the suit,

unless the land is in cultivation and using water for irrigation; and lands shall not be taxed for Paragraphs (1) and (2) of Subsection B of this section for the periods and to the extent that, on account of seepage or other conditions, in the opinion of the directors or the secretary of the interior, as may be provided by contract with the United States, or with district bondholders, such lands are not fit for cultivation by irrigation on account of those conditions; but nothing contained in this section shall be construed to relieve the district from making provision to raise the amount required to make full payment to private creditors or to the United States for the full cost of construction or of operation and maintenance, irrespective of the exemption of any lands from taxation, unless expressly provided by the assent of the bondholders or other private creditors or by agreement with the United States, as the case may be. In determining the amount required for the respective items aforesaid, the board shall take into consideration the gross amount of exemption and credits allowable pursuant to entries made by the board upon the assessor's certified list, as provided in Section 73-11-31 NMSA 1978. Proper entry shall be made by the district officers of all exemptions made and of credits allowed. The amount required to meet the obligations of the district, except that portion collected from tolls and charges, shall be raised by tax assessments, levy and collection, as provided in Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978, to be extended pro rata per acre over all lands in the district or, in appropriate cases, under Paragraph (2) of Subsection B of this section, against all land in each respective unit of the district. When the board meets for the purposes prescribed, it shall consider, determine and designate the lands within the district that shall be subjected to those assessments and levies.

D. Notice of the time, place and purpose of the meeting shall be given by publication in English and Spanish in a newspaper of general circulation published within the county where the headquarters of the district are located and shall inform all the persons interested that, at the time and place specified, an opportunity will be afforded to appear before the board of directors and show cause why any particular tract of land, or any portion of it, should be exempted from taxation under the provisions of Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978. The notice shall be published once a week for four consecutive weeks, and the last publication shall be not less than three days prior to the date fixed for the meeting. Proof of publication shall be furnished by the publisher and shall be filed in the archives of the secretary of the district.

E. At the meeting, the board of directors, subject to reasonable rules as it may prescribe, shall afford to all persons desiring to do so an opportunity to make a showing as they may deem proper as to why any given tract of land or portion of it shall be exempted from taxation. In each case, the board of directors may make an investigation as it may deem proper, after which the board shall determine the question submitted, as right and justice may require, and shall cause its decision to be duly entered upon its minutes and a copy of it to be sent by registered mail to all parties who have made claim of exemption of land from taxation.

F. A person aggrieved by the decision may appeal to the district court pursuant to the provisions of Section 39-3-1.1 NMSA 1978.

G. The filing of the appeal in the district court shall not stay the proceedings relating to the collection of the tax. In the event that the appellant has paid the tax before the rendition of final judgment in the suit and judgment is rendered in the suit in favor of the appellant, the appellant shall have refunded to him a sum of money as shall be determined by the judgment of the court, together with legal interest on it and costs of court. If the appellant fails to recover in the suit, the appellant shall pay all costs of court. In case the assets and liabilities of any water users' association are taken over as provided in Section 73-10-1 NMSA 1978, the board of directors shall allow to the owner of lands, on account of which payment has been made to the association, all proper and equitable credits to which the owner may be entitled, according to the books and records of the association, which shall be prima facie evidence of the credits of its various members. The credits shall be taken into consideration by the board of directors in determining the amount of money required to meet obligations, maintenance, operating and current expenses of the district for the ensuing year, and the board of directors shall certify to the county commissioners the amount of the credits, and levy as provided for in Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978 shall be made accordingly.

H. The term "asset" as used in this section includes any and all grants, rights, powers, privileges and appropriations conferred by law and upon any water users' association and upon taking over the assets of any water users' association as provided in Chapter 73, Articles 10 and 11 NMSA 1978 by any irrigation district. The district shall succeed to all such grants, rights, powers, privileges and appropriations, and the officers of the irrigation district are authorized and empowered to perform such duties and execute such instruments in regard thereto as the law required of the officers of the water users' association.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 21; 1921, ch. 39, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 73-122; 1941 Comp., § 77-2329; Laws 1953, ch. 23, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-29; Laws 1998, ch. 55, § 89; 1999, ch. 265, § 91.

### **73-11-30. [Charges for water; payment in advance; unpaid charges become part of assessment; assessment of omitted property.]**

Whenever any tolls and charges for the use of water have been fixed by the board of directors it shall be lawful to make the same payable in advance, and in case any such tolls and charges remain unpaid, or any balances for water delivered by measurement are unpaid at the time specified for levying the annual assessment, the amount due for such tolls and charges or balances may be added to, and become a part of the assessment levied upon the land upon which the water, for which such tolls, charges or balances are unpaid, was used. Any land which may have escaped assessment for any year or years shall, in addition to the assessment for the then current year, be assessed for such year or years with the same effect and with the same penalties as are provided for the current year, and any property delinquent for any year may be directly assessed during the current year for any expenses caused the district on account of such delinquency.

In the event any land within said district subject to assessment for any of the purposes of the district has not been assessed by the county assessor, or does not appear upon the county assessment roll as prepared for the county treasurer and collector, the land submitted belonging to any person, copartnership, association, corporation or municipality, shall be forthwith assessed by the county treasurer upon an order of the board of directors of the district (approved by the board of county commissioners), and as so ordered a description of the property so omitted shall be written on the roll and the proper assessment levied.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 11; C.S. 1929, § 73-165; 1941 Comp., § 77-2330; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-30.

### **73-11-31. [Duties of county assessor; assessment list furnished county commissioners.]**

It shall be the duty of the county assessor of any county embracing the whole or any part of an irrigation district to enter upon his tax roll each year, the name of the owner, description and area of each tract of land in said district, in said county, subject to taxation under this act, and to deliver a certified list thereof to the county commissioners of said county and to transmit a like certified list to the secretary of said irrigation district on or before July 1st of each year. If the board of directors has exempted any lands from taxation, in whole or in part, or if the secretary of the interior has taken similar action pursuant to contract with the district, or if any tract is entitled to credit upon assessments by reason of payments to any water users' association also, under the provisions of Section 21 [73-11-29 NMSA 1978] of said Chapter 20, or any amendment thereof, or if there be drainage assessments judiciously confirmed as in this act provided or awards for damages due to drainage or other work pursuant to Section 20 [73-11-12 NMSA 1978] of said Chapter 20, the secretary of the district shall note such exemptions, credits and drainage assessments and awards for each tract upon the certified list furnished by the assessor as in this section provided, and the said list, together with the items prescribed in said Section 21 [73-11-29 NMSA 1978], or any amendment thereof, shall be delivered to the county commissioners of the county in which the office of the said irrigation district is located within sixty days from and after the receipt of such certified list by the secretary of such district.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 22; 1921, ch. 39, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 73-123; 1941 Comp., § 77-2331; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-31.

### **73-11-32. [Levy of taxes; duty of county commissioners when district in more than one county.]**

It shall be the duty of the county commissioners of the county in which the office of the district is located, acting under the provisions of this act, upon the receipt of the certificate of the board of directors, certifying the amounts to be raised for the different purposes hereinbefore mentioned, and upon receipt of the assessor's certified list of the tracts of lands in the district upon which the secretary of the district has entered the

notations hereinbefore referred to, to fix the respective rates of levy per acre necessary to provide the amounts of money required for said purposes as specified in said certificate. The rate of levy necessary to raise the required amount of money for said district shall be increased 15 percent to cover delinquencies. And if there be any other county or counties wherein are situate lands within the district to be taxed hereunder the said county commissioners shall certify to the county commissioners of such other county or counties, the said tax levies and the lists of land in such other county or counties subject to taxation therefor. The respective boards of county commissioners of such other counties shall furnish to the respective county assessors of such other counties such tax levies and lists of lands, and such county assessors shall thereupon cause extension to be made upon their assessment rolls of the amounts due from each tract of land for each of said purposes in separate columns and also the total taxes so levied for all of the purposes of said irrigation district, and also the total amount due from each tract for all of the purposes of said irrigation district.

For the purposes of said district, it shall be the duty of the county commissioners in each county in which any irrigation district is located, in whole or in part, at the time of making the levy for county purposes, to make a levy as above provided upon all lands within their respective counties, subject to taxation under this act, and to deliver a notice thereof to the county assessor, which notice shall be accompanied [accompanied] by a certified list of said tracts of land within said district with notations made thereon as aforesaid.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 23; C.S. 1929, § 73-124; 1941 Comp., § 77-2332; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-32.

### **73-11-33. [County treasurers ex-officio district treasurers; duties; funds; report to board of directors; clerical assistance.]**

The county treasurer of the county in which is located the office of any irrigation district, shall be and is hereby constituted ex-officio district treasurer of said district, and said county treasurer shall be liable upon his official bond, and to indictment and criminal prosecution for malfeasance, misfeasance or failure to perform any duty herein prescribed as county treasurer or district treasurer, as is provided by law in other cases as county treasurer. Said treasurer shall receive and receipt for all monies belonging to said district. It shall be the duty of the county treasurer in each county in which any irrigation district is located, in whole or in part, to collect and receipt for all taxes levied as herein provided, in the same manner and at the same time as is required in the receipt for, and collection of, taxes upon real estate for county purposes; provided, that such county treasurer shall receive in payment of the district bond fund taxes above mentioned for the year in which said taxes were levied, interest coupons or bonds issued by said irrigation districts maturing within said year, the same as so much lawful money of the United States, if such interest coupons do not exceed the amount of taxes for district bond funds which the person tendering the same owes. The county treasurer of each county comprising a portion only of any irrigation district, excepting the county treasurer of the county in which the office of said district is located, on the first Monday



of every month, shall remit to the district treasurer aforesaid, all monies and coupons theretofore collected or received by him on account of said district. Every county treasurer shall keep a district bond fund account, a district contract fund account, a district operation and maintenance fund account and a district general fund account, and the proceeds of the taxes collected shall be covered into the respective funds. The bond fund shall consist of all monies collected for principal and interest of the bonds issued by the said district; the district contract fund shall consist of all monies received from taxes levied to provide for payments to the United States; the operation and maintenance fund shall consist of all monies received on account of the operation and maintenance of irrigation and drainage system, except monies to be paid to the United States pursuant to any contract; and the general fund shall consist of all monies received on account of current and miscellaneous expenses, not to be covered into any of the foregoing funds.

The district treasurer aforesaid shall pay out of said bond fund when due, the interest and principal of said bonds of said district, at the time and place specified in said bonds. The district treasurer shall pay out of said contract fund, all payments as they become due to the United States under contract at the time and in the manner provided in said contract. The district treasurer shall pay out of said operation and maintenance fund, only upon warrants signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary of the district, directed to such party or parties as are due payments for operating and maintaining said irrigation and drainage system. The district treasurer shall pay out of said general fund only upon order signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary of said district.

The district treasurer, on the fifteenth day of each month, shall report to the board of directors of said district the amount of money in his hands to the credit of the respective funds above provided. All such district taxes collected and paid to the county treasurers as aforesaid shall be received by said treasurers in their official capacity and they shall respectively be responsible for the safekeeping, disbursement and payment thereof the same as for other monies collected by them as such treasurers. Provided, that said county treasurers shall not receive any commission for the collection of said district taxes but shall receive for clerical assistance the sum of ten (\$10.00) dollars monthly for each 25,000 acres of land or major fraction thereof situate in his county, subject to taxation herein for district purposes.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 24; C.S. 1929, § 73-125; 1941 Comp., § 77-2333; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-33.

### **73-11-34. [Errors or irregularities in tax; validity of assessment and levy; sale for taxes; validity.]**

Any irregularity or error in the description of land assessed shall not be deemed jurisdictional or render the assessment void, if the land assessed can be identified. All matters and things done by the board of directors as by law provided are prima facie evidence that all the requirements of the law in relation thereto have been complied

with, and that the same are liens against the property to the same extent as other taxes lawfully levied. When land is sold under the revenue laws of this state for irrigation assessments correctly imposed as the property of a particular person, no misnomer of the owner, or supposed owner, or other mistake relating to the ownership thereof, affects the sale or renders it void or voidable. Such sale or procedure relating thereto shall not be attacked or questioned for any reason, or on any grounds except that the land assessed was not subject to such assessment, or that such assessment had been paid at the time of the sale.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 13; C.S. 1929, § 73-167; 1941 Comp., § 77-2334; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-34.

### **73-11-35. [Bids by district at tax sale; district to pay cash.]**

The district may appear as a bidder at the sale of any lands for delinquent district or other taxes, and may purchase and take title to said lands and dispose of them like any other purchaser. To protect its assessments the district, at a tax sale where there is no other bid for the full amount of the delinquencies, including interest and penalties, may bid and buy in the land; provided, the district shall never bid or pay a greater sum than the total of all taxes against the land, with interest and penalties; and, provided, further, when purchasing any land at any tax sale the district shall pay cash for all taxes, interest and penalties, including the district taxes, like other purchasers, and such expenditures shall be deemed operating expenses of the district, and may be assessed as maintenance charges.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 14; C.S. 1929, § 73-168; 1941 Comp., § 77-2335; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-35.

### **73-11-36. [General tax laws applicable.]**

The revenue laws of this state for the assessment, levying and collection of taxes on real estate for county purposes except as herein modified, shall be applicable for the purposes of this act, including the enforcement of penalties and forfeiture for delinquent taxes.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 25; C.S. 1929, § 73-126; 1941 Comp., § 77-2336; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-36.

### **73-11-37. [Date for payment of taxes.]**

That the taxes, levies and assessments of any irrigation district, cooperating with the United States under the federal reclamation law, and other federal laws, shall be due and payable as follows: first half December 1st of each year and the second half on June 1st of each year.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2337; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-37.

### **73-11-38. [Delinquent taxes; interest.]**

On January 1st of each year if the taxes, levies and assessments made the previous year shall not have been paid, one-half thereof shall become delinquent and on July 1st following if not paid, the remaining one-half of said taxes, assessments and levies shall become delinquent and such taxes, assessments and levies from the respective dates of delinquency shall bear interest at the rate of one percent per month until paid.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2338; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-38.

### **73-11-39. [Delinquent assessments; interest.]**

That on assessments made in irrigation districts, organized to cooperate with the United States government under the federal reclamation laws and other federal laws, after any such assessment shall become delinquent, the same shall bear interest at the rate of one-half (1/2%) percent per month until paid.

**History:** Laws 1937, ch. 76, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-38.1.

### **73-11-40. [Delinquent tax list in district with assessor-collector; publication.]**

That within six months after first day of July of each year it shall be the duty of the assessor-collector of such irrigation district to prepare and be caused to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county or counties where any such irrigation district is located, a list containing the names of owners of all property upon which taxes, assessments and levies of the district have become delinquent, together with the description and the amount of taxes, assessments, levies, penalties and costs due, opposite each name, and in the event taxes, levies and assessments of the district are due and unpaid for any preceding year or years on any piece of property described in said publication, shall include in said publication all the unpaid taxes, levies and assessments due against any piece of property described therein setting forth the years for which the same are due, together with the amount of tax, assessment and levy and the interest, penalties and costs for each year.

That the assessor-collector must append and publish with the delinquent tax list a notice that he will, on a certain day to be specified in said notice, occurring not less than 30 days after the last publication of said notice, offer for sale and sell at public auction, at the front door of the courthouse of the county in which the land therein described shall be located, the real estate described in said notice for the amount of taxes, assessments, levies, penalties, interest and costs thereon. The said delinquent tax list and notice shall be published not less than once each week for the period of four consecutive weeks. The whole of the advertisement shall be contained in each edition of such newspaper and supplement, if such supplement be necessary, provided that the assessor-collector may subsequently advertise in the same manner for the sale of any

lands or real estate that may have been omitted, or erroneously advertised or described, in the first advertisements.'

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2339; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-39.

### **73-11-41. [Failure of assessor-collector to publish delinquency list in time; later publication.]**

If by the neglect of the officer, or for any other good cause, real estate cannot be duly advertised and offered for sale within the time prescribed in this act [73-11-37, 73-11-38, 73-11-40 to 73-11-47 NMSA 1978], such advertisement may be made or had at any other time and the officer so advertising may set out in the advertisement the reasons for such delay.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2340; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-40.

### **73-11-42. [Delinquent tax sale by assessor-collector; disposition of surplus; sales to district.]**

The assessor-collector, in person, or by deputy, shall attend at the courthouse in the county on the day specified in the notice of sale of property hereunder, and shall, between the hours of 10 o'clock in the forenoon and four o'clock in the afternoon, offer for sale, separately and in consecutive order, each parcel of property included in the list attached to the order of sale, or so much thereof as may be necessary to realize the amounts due. The same shall be continued from day to day until all the property described in the notice of sale, shall be sold, or until the amounts due shall be paid or realized. In case any property ordered to be sold be in too large tract or tracts to be conveniently sold, then the assessor-collector shall offer the smallest tract in acres for which any one shall bid the amount of tax and penalty, such tract to be as nearly as may be square body beginning at the northeast corner of the whole tract. In case the property sold shall realize more than enough to pay the amount due, the surplus shall be paid over by such assessor-collector, to the owner of such property. Each lot or parcel of property offered for sale shall be struck off to the best bidder for cash; but if there should be no purchaser in good faith, bidding upon the same, the whole amount of the property assessed shall be struck off to the district as the purchaser and the duplicate certificate delivered to the treasurer of the district and filed by him in his office after having the same recorded in the office of the county clerk of said county, and the assessor-collector shall make an entry "sold to the district" on the tax roll opposite the tax and shall be credited with the amount thereon in his settlement.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 77-2341; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-41.

### **73-11-43. [Failure to pay bid to assessor-collector; resale; certificate of sale; recording; redemption; occupancy during redemption period.]**

If a purchaser does not pay the amount of his bid before ten o'clock of the day succeeding the sale, the property shall be reoffered for sale and the bid of any person refusing to make any such payment shall not be received on the resale of any such property. After receiving the amount for which said real estate shall be sold, the assessor-collector shall execute and deliver to the purchaser thereof a certificate of sale containing a description of the property sold, and stating the name of the person or persons against whom the same was assessed, or that the same was assessed against unknown owners, as the case may be, the amount paid therefor, that it was sold for taxes, the amount and for the year or years for which the taxes were assessed, the amount of interest, penalties and costs, the date of sale, and the consideration or amount so paid therefor at such sale, that the assessor-collector by virtue of the authority vested in him by law, has sold and does convey said real estate to said purchaser, his heirs and assigns, subject to the right of the owner to redeem the same within three years from date of sale by paying to the purchaser, his heirs or assigns, the amount paid therefor at such sale with interest thereon at the rate of one and one-half percent per month from date of sale. Such certificate must be recorded in the office of the county clerk of the county in which such real estate is located in a book to be kept for the purpose of recording such certificates and when so recorded, shall vest in the purchaser, his heirs or assigns, a complete legal title to the real estate described therein, subject however, to redemption as herein provided, and such property shall thereafter, unless redeemed, be assessed in the name of the purchaser, or his assigns, but the former owner shall have the right to redeem the same at any time within three years from the date of sale by paying to the assessor-collector then in office, for the use of the purchaser the amount of purchase money with interest at the rate of one and one-half percent per month from date of such sale, together with any taxes that may have been paid upon such real estate by the purchaser and assignees with interest thereon at the same rate; and such former owner may retain possession of said real estate until redeemed, or until the time of redemption has expired.

The assessor-collector shall keep a book of sale containing the dates of sale, description of the property sold, name of purchaser and amount for which sold. Upon the redemption of any property sold, as herein provided, the assessor-collector shall enter the fact of such redemption upon his book of sales, and shall issue to the person redeeming a certificate of redemption describing the property and giving the date of redemption and amount paid, upon the production of such certificate of redemption the county clerk shall mark the word "redeemed" with the date of redemption and by whom redeemed, on the margin of the page where the record of such certificate of sale is made, and from the date of such redemption when so made, and noted, the certificate of sale shall be deemed canceled and annulled.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 77-2342; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-42.

### **73-11-44. [Tax deed issued by assessor-collector; form; effect.]**

At any time after the expiration of the term of three years from the date of the tax sale certificate where the property has not been redeemed on demand of the holder of

the tax sale certificate, presentation thereof to the assessor-collector, payment of the fee of one dollar [(\$1.00)], the assessor-collector shall execute and deliver to said person a tax deed for said property, said deed shall vest in the grantee, his heirs, successors and assigns, a perfect and complete title, in fee simple, to said premises, free and clear of all liens and encumbrances, except taxes, levies and assessments of the district levied thereon prior, or subsequent to the year for which the same was sold, and county, state and municipal taxes, which deed shall be substantially in the following form:

### TAX DEED

No. \_\_\_\_\_

State of New Mexico

County of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ district of the State of New Mexico, does hereby grant, bargain, sell and convey unto \_\_\_\_\_, his heirs and assigns (and successors) forever, the following described property, situate in the County of \_\_\_\_\_, State of New Mexico, to wit: (description of property).

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD said property and its appurtenances unto the grantee, his heirs, executors, administrators, successors and assigns forever.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assessor-Collector of the  
\_\_\_\_\_ Irrigation  
District of New Mexico.

An assessor-collector may include more than one parcel of land in a deed executed and delivered to any person or persons holding more than one certificate of sale, and the assessor-collector shall be entitled to a fee of one dollar [(\$1.00)] to be paid by the grantee, and any tax deed so issued shall estop all parties from raising any objection thereto, except that the taxes, levies and assessments have been paid or that the real estate was not liable to such tax, levy and assessments.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 77-2343; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-43.

**73-11-45. [Sale of tax sale certificate held by district; duty of assessor-collector.]**

In case any property shall be bid in by the district as provided in Section 5 [73-11-42 NMSA 1978], the duplicate certificate of sale shall be sold by the assessor-collector to any person who shall pay the face value thereof with accrued interest; and if the same cannot be sold at private sale within one year from the date of such certificate, the said certificate shall be sold at public auction to the highest bidder for cash by the assessor-collector, or his successor in office at the time of making sales of property for delinquent taxes, assessments and levies for the succeeding year.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 8; 1941 Comp., § 77-2344; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-44.

### **73-11-46. [Assessment in name of purchaser; assignment of certificate.]**

All real estate so sold shall be assessed for the succeeding year in the name of the purchaser, or his assign, if the name of such assignee be known; and it shall be the duty of every such purchaser upon making an assignment of said certificate to cause the same to be noted upon the page of the book in which such certificate is recorded in the office of the county clerk.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 9; 1941 Comp., § 77-2345; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-45.

### **73-11-47. [Property of unknown owners; tax sales by district.]**

Whenever any property is listed on the assessment roll of the district, if the property of unknown owners, the same proceedings shall be had as provided for in this act [73-11-37, 73-11-38, 73-11-40 to 73-11-47 NMSA 1978] against the property of known owners.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 91, § 10; 1941 Comp., § 77-2346; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-46.

### **73-11-48. Suit for collection of assessments and charges.**

A. The board of directors of any irrigation district formed for the purpose of cooperating with the United States government under the federal reclamation laws and other federal laws may bring suit at law for the recovery [recovery] of assessments, tolls and charges which may be due from any person or corporation, or upon any property. If the assessments be a lien upon any real estate, the fact shall be stated in the complaint, together with a description of said real estate. The judgment in such case, if in favor of the district, shall, in addition to other ordinary requisites, contain a description of the real estate, if any, upon which such assessments, tolls and charges are a lien, and shall itself be a lien thereon, and shall contain an order for the sale thereof. The order of sale shall likewise contain a description of such real estate and shall be directed to the sheriff of the county in which such real estate is situated.

B. In lieu of bringing suit for collection of assessment and charges, the board of directors of any irrigation district may elect to declare forfeited the water rights on any land less than two acres within the district for which assessments and charges are delinquent and on which irrigation district water has not been used for a period of three years.

C. When charges or assessments are delinquent for a period in excess of three years and if the board of directors determines to declare forfeited the water rights on the lands within the district for which the charges are delinquent, a notice shall be first given to the owner and [sic] at the address shown by the records of the district, and which notice shall be sent by registered and certified mail and allow the owner thirty days from the date that such notice is received within which time to correct such delinquency by paying the assessments and charges, with accrued interest, and such notice shall further provide that the landowner, within said thirty-day period, may, instead of making payment of the assessments and charges, file a written notice of protest with the board of directors stating why such assessment and charges are not owed. Unless payment is so made or the notice of protest so filed within said period of time, then the board of directors may declare the water rights on such land forfeited. In the event that a protest is filed within said period of time, a hearing shall be held before the board of directors and if such protest is thereafter denied, then the delinquent assessment and charges shall be forthwith paid or the water rights forfeited.

D. Any forfeited water rights will be subject to further appropriation for use on other lands within the district in accordance with rules adopted by the board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1937, ch. 97, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2347; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-47; Laws 1981, ch. 334, § 1.

### **73-11-49. [Payment of claims; warrants; register of warrants.]**

No claim, except as otherwise provided in Section 24 [73-11-33 NMSA 1978], of said Chapter 20, shall be paid by the district treasurer until the same shall have been allowed by the board, and only upon warrants signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary, which warrants shall state the date authorized by the board and for what purpose; provided, however, warrants to pay current expenses, salaries, labor and material accounts may be drawn by an officer and an employee, designated by standing order of the directors, when such accounts have been contracted and ordered paid by the directors. Provided, also, no warrant shall be issued or obligation incurred unless the district treasurer has sufficient funds on hand to pay such warrant when it is presented for payment. The district treasurer shall keep a register in which he shall enter each warrant presented for payment, showing the date and amount of such warrant, to whom payable, the date of the presentation for payment, the date of payment, and all warrants shall be paid in the order of their presentation for payment to the district treasurer.



**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 27; 1921, ch. 39, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 73-128; 1941 Comp., § 77-2348; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-48.

### **73-11-50. Financial statement of directors.**

A. The board of directors of any such irrigation district, at the first regular meeting of each year, shall render, and immediately thereafter cause to be published a verified statement of the financial condition of the district for the preceding year, together with a statement of expenditures by the United States under any contract the district has entered into with the United States, or other construction contracts, such statement or statements to show status of administration expenses, operation and maintenance costs and construction costs, in a manner reasonably clear to the general public. Said publications shall be made at least once each week for two weeks in some newspaper published in the county where the office of the district is located, or the said statements may be issued in pamphlet or leaflet form and mailed to the last known address of each qualified elector.

B. The board of directors of any irrigation district organized for the purpose of cooperation with the United States under the federal reclamation law, so long as such district is in continued cooperation with the United States in accordance with the purpose for which it was organized, may satisfy the publication requirements of this subsection in lieu of the requirements imposed by Subsection A of this section in the following manner:

(1) by maintaining on file in the office of the district the same financial information as required to be published by other irrigation districts; and,

(2) making such financial [financial] information available for inspection by any qualified elector of the district; and

(3) providing any qualified elector of the district a copy of such financial information upon request.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 73-162; 1941 Comp., § 77-2349; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-49; Laws 1959, ch. 250, § 1.

### **73-11-51. [Violation of duty; liability on bond; removal from office.]**

For any wilful violation of any express duty herein provided for on the part of any officer named in this act, or in Chapter 20, Session Laws of 1919, he shall be liable upon his official bond and be subject to removal from office by proceedings brought in the district court of the county wherein the office of the board of directors of the district is located by any assessment payer of the district.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 12; C.S. 1929, § 73-166; 1941 Comp., § 77-2350; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-50.

### **73-11-52. ["District" defined; law of 1919.]**

Wherever the word district is used in this act it shall be held to mean and include only the lands described in the official order establishing said district and the official plat thereof on record in the office of the county clerk, as hereinbefore provided in this act, and such lands as may be included in any district in accordance with the provisions of Sections 34 to 43 [73-10-26 to 73-10-35 NMSA 1978] inclusive.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 58; C.S. 1929, § 73-159; 1941 Comp., § 77-2351; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-51.

### **73-11-53. [Construction of law of 1919.]**

This act shall be construed as applying only to districts organized for the purpose of cooperation with the United States under the federal reclamation law or other federal laws as defined in Section one [1] [73-10-1 NMSA 1978] hereof and nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to affect or interfere with the organization, operation or maintenance of any irrigation district organized or to be organized under any other laws of this state. Nor shall this act be so construed as to affect the validity of any district heretofore organized under the laws of this state for the purpose of cooperation with the United States under the federal reclamation law or other federal laws, or its right in or to property or any of its rights or privileges of whatsoever kind or nature; but said districts are hereby made subject to the provisions of this act so far as applicable; nor shall this act be construed to affect, impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge, for, or upon which such district was or might become liable or chargeable had not this act been passed; nor shall it affect the validity of any bonds which have been issued and sold, or issued but not sold; nor shall it affect any action which may now be pending.

Provided, that any irrigation district heretofore organized, or hereafter to be organized under the provisions of any other laws of this state which may desire to cooperate with the United States under the federal reclamation law or other federal laws, may enter into a contract with the United States providing for such cooperation with the United States, and after such contract shall have been approved by a majority of the qualified electors of said district at an election held as provided under this act, such irrigation district shall thereafter become subject to the provisions of this act.

**History:** Laws 1919, ch. 20, § 59; C.S. 1929, § 73-160; 1941 Comp., § 77-2352; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-52.

### **73-11-54. [Definitions and construction; law of 1921.]**

Whenever the term "irrigation district" or the word "district" shall appear in this act, it shall mean irrigation district organized under and by virtue of Chapter 20, Session Laws of New Mexico, 1919, or acts supplemental thereto or amendatory thereof; and the words "this act" appearing in the foregoing amendatory sections, may be construed as

applying also to said Chapter 20, and the words "board of directors" or the word "directors" anywhere in this act shall mean the board of directors of such an irrigation district; and the following sections herein except the last are to be construed as applying only to irrigation districts so organized.

**History:** Laws 1921, ch. 39, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 73-161; 1941 Comp., § 77-2353; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-53.

### **73-11-55. [Unpaid per-acre construction charges to remain as lien.]**

That whenever any irrigation district in this state, organized for the purpose of cooperating with the United States under the federal reclamation laws and acts amendatory thereof and supplemental thereto, shall have paid in full all construction charges due from such district to the United States, under the construction contract, and there shall remain any lands in the district upon which the per-acre charge for construction under the contract between the United States and the district have not been paid in full, such charges shall continue as a lien against such lands until paid in full. The district is hereby authorized to continue to assess such lands for such unpaid construction charges for a period not to exceed twenty years following the date of final payment of the construction liability of the district to the United States, and to collect the same until they have been paid in full; and the board of directors of said district shall be authorized to set the period of repayment within the twenty-year period specified above. The monies derived from such assessments shall be used by the district for operation, maintenance and betterment of the district's works.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2516a, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 26, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-24-54.

## **ARTICLE 12**

### **Electrical Irrigation Districts**

#### **73-12-1. Majority of the resident freeholders may propose district.**

Whenever a majority of the resident freeholders, owning more than one-half of the lands or the evidence of title to said lands in any arid or semiarid district in the state of New Mexico, desire to provide for the irrigation of the same by pumping water for such irrigation, they may propose the organization of an irrigation district under the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] and when so organized such district shall have the powers conferred or that may hereafter be conferred by law upon such irrigation district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-701; 1941 Comp., § 77-2401; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-1.

### **73-12-2. Petition, where filed and contents; definition of term "resident freeholders"; security for costs.**

For the purpose of the establishment of an irrigation district, as provided by this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], a petition shall be filed with the board of county commissioners of the county which embraces the largest acreage of the proposed district, praying that said board define and establish the general boundaries of said proposed district, setting forth by legal subdivision the lands within said general boundaries that are to be included in and become a part of said proposed district and praying that the said board submit the question of the final organization of the same to the vote of the qualified electors resident therein. Said petition shall state that it is the purpose of the petitioners to organize an electrical irrigation district under the provisions of this act and shall also contain a general description of the outer boundaries of such district and a description by legal subdivisions within such outer boundaries of the lands to be included and become a part of such district; the total number of acres therein; the means proposed to supply water for the irrigation of the lands embraced therein; and the estimated cost thereof, and the estimated cost of pumping per acre-foot of water in the manner proposed; the name proposed for such district and the names of three of said petitioners selected as a committee to file and to present petition to the board of county commissioners. Said petition shall be signed by a majority of the resident freeholders of lands to be included in said proposed district and who shall also be the owners in the aggregate of a majority of the whole number of acres of the land to be included within these said proposed districts.

For the purpose of this act the term "resident freeholder" shall be construed to mean any citizen of the United States who owns land within the district or the evidence of title to said land or who is an entryman under the public land laws of the United States or a purchaser under contract for purchase of state lands and shall also include corporations, associations and copartnerships owning land within the district. The president or vice president of such corporation or association or any member of such copartnership, if citizens of the United States, may represent such corporation, association or copartnership, respectively, in signing such petition or any other petition or written objection, exception or protest provided for in this act.

The committee presenting such petition to the board of county commissioners, as hereinbefore provided, shall give such security or make such deposit as the board of county commissioners in the county may require of them, conditioned upon the payment of all costs, if, for any reason, such proposed district should fail of organization.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 73-702; 1941 Comp., § 77-2402; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-2.

### **73-12-3. Notice of hearing on petition to be published.**

When such petition is presented, it shall be the duty of the board of county commissioners with which such petition is filed, at the next regular or special meeting

thereafter or at a special meeting called earlier for the purpose to fix a date for the hearing on said petition, naming in the minutes of such board the day and date thereof, the place of hearing which shall be at the office of said board, and cause the county clerk of said county to publish a notice of such hearing in English for at least two weeks before the time to which the same is to be held in some newspaper of general circulation published in the county where such hearing is to be held, which notice shall contain a copy of said petition and shall state the time and place of such hearing and shall notify all persons affected or interested by or in the organization of such proposed district to appear at such time and place and present to said board any objection, exception or protest to the organization of such proposed district. The last publication of such notice shall be made not less than five days prior to the time fixed by said notice for presenting said petition.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 73-703; 1941 Comp., § 77-2403; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-3.

#### **73-12-4. Petition hearing; objections; boundaries; election; appeals.**

A. At the hearing before the board of county commissioners provided for in Section 73-12-3 NMSA 1978, the board shall proceed to determine whether the petition has been signed by the requisite number of petitioners; whether the lands in the proposed district are arid or semiarid lands; whether the lands are susceptible to irrigation and have a fertile soil that will warrant farming them by irrigation; whether there is a supply of water that can be made efficiently available for irrigation by the use of pumps; whether the proposed plan is practicable; and whether, on the whole, the development said to result from the introduction of power is of such interest and benefit to the whole district as to impress it with the character of public use. For the purpose of determining the public use of the operations of the proposed district and all other of the foregoing questions, the board of county commissioners is established as an inferior court and its decisions shall be binding upon all persons interested unless reversed on appeal as provided in this section, and if modified or affirmed, it shall be so binding.

B. If the board of county commissioners hearing the matter determines that the petition has been signed by the requisite number of petitioners as required by Chapter 73, Article 12 NMSA 1978 and determines that the proposed development is of such interest and benefit to the whole district as to impress with the character of public use, it shall then proceed to hear any objections, exceptions and protests that have been made in writing to the organization of the district or to the inclusion of any lands within the district or to the exclusion of lands from the district and other objections, exceptions and protests as may be presented in writing to the organization of the district. All persons whose lands have not been included in the proposed district, as defined in the petition, have the right to appear before the board at the time and place as parties interested in or affected by the organization of the district and have the right to petition that their lands be included within the district, and, if it appears to the board that the inclusion of such lands may be made without materially increasing the cost of service, the commissioners may by order include such lands within the district.

C. If the board makes findings approving of the organization of the district, it shall then proceed to define the boundaries of the proposed district from the petition and from applications in writing for the exclusion of lands and the inclusion of lands from and in the district, as may be made in accordance with the intent of Chapter 73, Article 12 NMSA 1978. The board may adjourn the meeting from time to time not exceeding three weeks in all and shall, by final order duly entered upon its records, allow the prayer of the petition and define and establish the boundaries of the proposed district. Provided that the board shall not modify the proposed boundaries described in the petition so as to change the objects of the petition or so as to exempt from the operation of Chapter 73, Article 12 NMSA 1978 any land within the boundaries proposed by the petition susceptible to irrigation by the same system or power works applicable to other lands in the proposed district. No land that will not, in the judgment of the board, be benefited by the proposed system shall be included in the district if its owner makes written application at the hearing to withdraw it.

D. Any persons aggrieved by the decision of the board of county commissioners, upon the hearing provided for in this section, are given the right of appeal to the district court pursuant to the provisions of Section 39-3-1.1 NMSA 1978.

E. When the petition has been allowed and the boundaries established and the name of the proposed district designated, which shall be \_\_\_\_\_ electrical district, the board of county commissioners shall, by further order duly entered upon its records, call an election of the qualified electors of the district to be held for the purpose of determining whether the district shall be organized under the provisions of Chapter 73, Article 12 NMSA 1978 and by such order shall submit the names of one or more persons from each of three divisions of the district, as provided in this section, to be voted for as directors therein, and for the purpose of the election shall divide the district into three divisions, as nearly equal in size as may be practicable, to be numbered, respectively, 1, 2 and 3 and shall provide that a qualified elector of each of the three divisions shall be elected as a member of the board of directors of the district by the qualified electors of the whole district. Each of the divisions shall constitute an election precinct and the commissioners shall appoint three judges for each of the precincts, one of whom shall act as clerk of the election.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 73-704; 1941 Comp., § 77-2404; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-4; Laws 1998, ch. 55, § 90; 1999, ch. 265, § 92.

### **73-12-5. Notice of election; qualification of electors; election procedure.**

The board of county commissioners shall thereupon cause notice embodying the orders in substance, signed by the chairman and clerks of the board to be issued, given and published, giving public notice of the election, the time and place thereof and the matters submitted to the vote of the electors. The notice and order shall be published once a week for at least three weeks immediately prior to the date fixed for the election in a newspaper of general circulation published in the county, and, if any portion of the

proposed district lies within any other county or counties, then the order and notice shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation published within each of those counties. Publication shall be made in English. At the election and all elections held under the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], all persons who are resident freeholders and owners of the land within the district, citizens of the United States and who are qualified electors under the Election Code [Chapter 1 NMSA 1978], shall be qualified electors, provided that if any farm or tract of land in the district is owned by more than one owner, only one person shall be permitted to vote at any election as the owner of such one farm or tract of land; and provided further that at such elections each otherwise qualified voter shall be entitled to cast and have counted as many votes as he shall have acres of land owned by him and situate within the district. Insofar as applicable, the general election laws of the state, except requirements for registration and except as otherwise provided for in this act, shall govern elections. Prior to the day of the election, the board of directors shall make up a list of the owners of land or the reputed owners of land for each of the three election districts, giving the number of acres owned or reputed to be owned by each person and furnish the list to the judges of election to be kept at the polls during the day of the election and the list of owners and acreage shall be prima facie evidence of the right of each owner to vote the number of acres shown to be owned by him by the list. No person shall vote by proxy or power of attorney except an officer or agent designated in writing as proxy or agent of a corporation entitled to vote at the election. The ballot to be used and cast at the election for the formation of the district shall have printed or typewritten thereon the words ". . . . . Electrical Irrigation District, . . . . . Yes . . . . . Votes, and . . . . . Electrical Irrigation District, . . . . . No . . . . . Votes," or words equivalent thereto and shall contain the names of the persons to be voted for as members of the board of directors of the district and each ballot shall be signed by the person casting the same. Each elector may vote for three directors, one from each division, and shall indicate his vote by placing a marginal cross upon the ballot for or against any questions submitted or name voted upon and opposite thereto together with the figure or figures indicating the number of votes he is entitled to cast thereat.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 73-705; 1941 Comp., § 77-2405; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-5; Laws 1973, ch. 138, § 33.

### **73-12-6. Canvass of votes, by board of county commissioners.**

The said board of county commissioners shall meet on the second Monday next after such election and canvass the votes cast thereat; and if it appears upon such canvass that at least two-thirds of the qualified electors voting at said election have voted "Electrical Irrigation District . . . . . Yes," the said board shall, by order duly entered upon the records, declare such territory duly organized as an irrigation district under the name and style theretofore designated, and shall declare the persons receiving respectively the highest number of votes for director to be duly elected to such office. Said board shall cause a copy of such order, including a plat of said district, duly certified by the clerk of the board of county commissioners, to be immediately filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which any portion of such lands

are situated, and no board of county commissioners of any county including any portion of such district shall, after the date of organization of such district, allow another district to be formed including any of the lands of such district, without the consent of the board of directors thereof; and from and after the date of such filing the organization of such district shall be complete and the officers thereof shall immediately enter upon the duties of their respective office [offices] qualifying in accordance with law, and shall hold such offices, respectively, until their successors are elected and qualified. The boundaries of said divisions and the voting precincts and polling places in any such district may, after such first election, be changed by order of the board of directors of the district; provided that the polling places shall be designated in the notice published for every election in the district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 6; C.S. 1929, § 73-706; 1941 Comp., § 77-2406; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-6.

### **73-12-7. Regular elections of district; oath of office and bond of directors.**

The regular election of said district shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in December in each second calendar year thereafter, at which said officers shall be elected. The person receiving the highest number of votes for any office to be filled at such election is elected thereto. Within ten days after receiving their certificates of election, hereinafter provided for, said officers shall take and subscribe the official oath and file the same in the office of the county clerk of the county where the organization was effected, and thereupon immediately assume the duties of their respective offices. Each member of said board of directors shall execute an official bond in the sum of three thousand dollars (\$3,000), which bond shall be approved by the chairman of the board of county commissioners of said county and shall be recorded in the office of the probate clerk and ex-officio county recorder thereof. All official bonds herein provided for shall be in form prescribed by law for official bonds for county officials, except that the obligee named in said bonds shall be the said district. The premiums upon such bonds and the bonds required from any other officer of the district shall be paid by the district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 73-707; 1941 Comp., § 77-2407; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-7.

### **73-12-8. Office of board; subsequent elections.**

The office of the board of directors shall be located in the county where the organization was effected. Fifteen (15) days before any election held under this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], subsequent to the organization of the district, the secretary who shall be appointed by the board of directors shall cause notice, specifying the polling places of each precinct, to be posted in three public places in each election precinct, of the time and place of holding the election, and shall also post a general notice of the same in the office of said board, which shall be established and kept at



some fixed place to be determined by said board in said county. Prior to the time for posting the notices, said board must appoint from each precinct, from the electors thereof, three judges, one of whom shall act as clerk, who shall constitute a board of election for such precinct. If the board fails to appoint a board of election, or the members appointed do not attend the opening of the polls on the morning of the election, the electors of the precinct present at the hour may appoint the board or supply the place of an absent member thereof. The board of directors must, in its order appointing the board of election, designate the hour and place in the precinct where the election must be held.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 73-708; 1941 Comp., § 77-2408; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-8.

### **73-12-9. The election board; oath of judges; polls kept open.**

One of the judges shall be chairman of the election board and may: first - administer all oaths required in the progress of any election; second - appoint judges and clerks, if during the progress of the election any judge or clerk ceases to act. Any member of the board of election, or any clerk thereof, may administer and certify the oaths required to be administered during the progress of an election. Before opening the polls, each member of the board must take and subscribe an oath to faithfully perform the duties imposed upon him by law. An elector of the precinct may administer and certify such oath. The polls must be opened at eight o'clock in the morning of election and be kept open until six o'clock p.m. of the same day. It shall be the duty of the clerk of the board of election to forthwith deliver the return duly certified to the board of directors of the district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 73-709; 1941 Comp., § 77-2409; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-9.

### **73-12-10. Returns canvassed by board of directors.**

No list, tally paper or certificate returned from any election shall be set aside or rejected for want of form, if it can be satisfactorily understood. The board of directors must meet at its usual place of meeting on the first Monday after election and canvass the returns. If at the time of meeting, the returns from each precinct in the district in which the polls were open have been received, the board of directors must then and there proceed to canvass the returns; but if all the returns have not been received, the canvass must be postponed from day to day until the returns have been received, or until six postponements have been had. The canvass must be made in public and by opening the returns and counting the votes cast for each person voted for, or as to each question voted upon, and declaring the results thereof. The board shall declare elected the person receiving the highest number of votes so returned for each office and also declare the result as to any question submitted.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 73-710; 1941 Comp., § 77-2410; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-10.

### **73-12-11. Secretary to certify results of election to county clerk.**

The secretary of the board of directors must, as soon as the result of any election held under the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] is declared, enter in the records of such board and file with the county clerk of the county in which the office of said district is located, a statement of such result, which statement must show: first, a copy of the publication notice of said election; second, the names of the judges of said election; third, the whole number of votes cast in the district and in each precinct of the district; fourth, the names of the persons voted for; fifth, the number of votes cast in the district for each of such persons; sixth, the names of the persons declared elected; seventh, the result declared on any question submitted, in accordance with the majority of the votes cast for or against such question. The secretary must immediately make out and deliver to the person elected a certificate of election, signed by him and authenticated with the seal of the board. In case of a vacancy in the board of directors by death, removal or inability from any cause to properly discharge the duties as such director, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the remaining members of the board, and upon their failure or inability to act within thirty days after such vacancy occurs, then upon petition of five electors of said district, the board of county commissioners of the county where the office of said board of directors is situate, shall fill such vacancy or vacancies. Any director appointed as above provided shall hold his office until the next general election of said district, and until his successor is elected and qualified.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 11; C.S. 1929, § 73-711; 1941 Comp., § 77-2411; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-11.

### **73-12-12. Organization of board, its powers, its duties; employment of engineers; rules and regulations; report on water supply and engineering plans; when bonds may be used in payment; when contracts must be ratified by electors; uniform rates; disposal of surplus power.**

The directors having duly qualified, shall organize as a board, elect a president from their number, appoint a secretary, who may be or may not be a member of the board. The board shall have the power and it shall be their duty to adopt a seal, manage and conduct the affairs of the district, make and execute all necessary contracts, employ such agents, attorneys, officers and employees as may be required and prescribe their duties, establish equitable rules and regulations for the purchasing and use of water, power or fuel among the owners of land in said district and generally perform all such acts as shall be necessary to fully carry out the purposes of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978]; which regulations, among other things, shall provide that no person shall be entitled or shall be permitted to use power or fuel furnished by the district for

pumping of water while the taxes or tolls or service charges due thereon or from the owner thereof for district purposes levied or imposed under the provisions are in arrears for more than six months.

As soon as practicable, after the board shall have organized, it shall employ a competent hydraulic engineer to determine and report upon the water supply available for pumping in the district, which report shall be a full and complete geological report from all available data relating to such water supply. The report accompanied by an examination fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) shall be submitted to the state engineer for his examination, and, if he shall find such report to be satisfactory and that there will be water sufficient to properly irrigate the lands within such district, he shall so certify under his hand and official seal. If the report submitted is found to be insufficient or incorrect, the state engineer shall return the same for correction to the directors of the district with the statement of his objections. If such report is not corrected so as to meet with the approval of the state engineer or if from such report and other available information the engineer is of the opinion that there is not sufficient water to properly irrigate the lands included within said district by pumping at a cost that will make such pumping practicable, he shall disapprove such report.

The board of directors shall have the right to appeal from the decision of the state engineer to the district court of the district in which such irrigation district is located where the sufficiency and accuracy of the report and available water supply and whether water for irrigation purposes can be pumped at a reasonable cost shall be determined. Until the report is approved by the state engineer or the courts no bond issue shall be made, as provided for in Section 15 [73-12-15 NMSA 1978] of this act. A copy of such report shall be kept on file in the office of the state engineer and in the office of the board of directors of such district and shall be available for examination by any person desiring to do so.

The board of directors shall also, at the same time, fully investigate the manner by which power can be brought into or generated within or without the district so as to be efficiently distributed to the landowners for irrigation purposes and for such purpose shall employ a competent engineer, who shall report to said board, making recommendations as to the character of power to be used, the cost of securing such power whether by purchase of power or power plant or by construction of a plant with transmission lines or otherwise, and shall furnish an estimate of the cost of such power to the owners of such lands per acre-foot of water pumped. Such report accompanied by an examination fee of twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars shall be submitted to the state engineer for his examination, and, if he shall find such report to be a full and complete report of the cost to the landowners of irrigation of his lands by the plan devised by said engineer and that it appears to be practicable to use such power for irrigation with the available water supply of the district, said state engineer shall approve such report and so certify under his hand and official seal. If such report submitted is found to be insufficient or incorrect, the state engineer shall return the same for correcting to the board of directors of the district with a statement of his objections. If such report is not corrected so as to meet with the approval of the state engineer or if from such report

and other available information the engineer is of the opinion that the manner of securing power for irrigation purposes is too expensive to be practicable or is otherwise impracticable he shall disapprove said report.

The board of directors shall have the right to appeal from the decision of the state engineer to the district court of the district in which such irrigation district is located where the sufficiency and accuracy of the report and where the practicability of the manner of securing water, power or fuel shall be determined. Until the report is approved by the state engineer or the courts, no bond issue shall be made, as provided for in Section 15 [73-12-15 NMSA 1978] of this act. A copy of such report shall be kept on file in the office of the state engineer and the office of the board of directors of the said irrigation district and shall be available for examination by any person desiring to do so.

Said board shall have the power (in addition to the means to supply water to said district) to construct, acquire or purchase any and all canals, ditches, reservoirs, reservoir sites, water, water wells, water rights, rights-of-way, motors, engines, power plants, power transmission lines, gas and oil lines or other property necessary for the use of the district and to contract with any person or corporation for supplying water or for power or fuel to be used in pumping water for any or all of the lands and purposes in said district; and may lease its plant or transmission lines under a contract with any person or corporation for operation purposes, for the supplying to such district power for pumping and other purposes; and also to construct drainage works necessary to prevent or relieve waterlog or [of] any lands within the district. In case of the purchase of any property or the payment of any debt by said district, the bonds of the district, hereinafter provided for, may be used at their par value in payment without previous offer of such bonds for sale. But no contract involving any consideration exceeding ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and no contract for the purchase, rental or delivery or [of] water or power or fuel involving annual charges or payments exceeding fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) shall be binding unless such contracts shall be authorized and ratified in writing by not less than a majority of the qualified electors of said district according to the number of votes cast at the last preceding election; nor shall any contract involving payment in excess of twenty-five thousand (\$25,000) dollars in one year be binding until such contract shall have been authorized and ratified by a majority of the votes at an election held in the manner provided for the issue of bonds.

The rules and regulations established by said board shall be printed in convenient form as soon as the same are adopted, for distribution in the district. All power distributed shall be at a uniform rate per kilowatt [kilowatt] hour. The board of directors shall have power to supply and deliver power or fuel within or without said district to others than owners of land within the district at such price and on such terms as they deem best, provided the price received for power or fuel shall be not less than the price charged to the owners of land within the district plus a price or charge which will make the total price not less than the total cost to the owners of land within the district. Provided no power or fuel shall be supplied to any other than a landowner in said district unless there shall be available a surplus of power over and above that needed for the

use of landowners within the irrigation district for pumping for irrigation purposes and for domestic uses.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 12; C.S. 1929, § 73-712; Laws 1931, ch. 133, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2412; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-12.

### **73-12-13. Regular and special meetings of board; records of board to be kept open; rights-of-way; right to acquire oil or gas for power; title to property; exemption from taxation.**

The board of directors shall hold a regular quarterly meeting in their office on the first Tuesday of January, April, July and October of each year and such special meetings as may be required for the proper transaction of business. All special meetings shall be called by the president of the board or any two directors. All meetings of the board must be made public and two members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and on all questions requiring a vote there shall be a concurrence of at least two members of said board. All records of the board must be open to the inspection of any elector during business hours. The board, its agents and employees, shall have the right to enter upon any land in the district to make surveys and to locate and construct any canal or canals and the necessary laterals and any power or transmission lines. Said board shall also have the right to acquire all lands, water rights, gas lines, oil lines franchise [franchises] and other property necessary for the construction, use, maintenance, repair and improvement of such property and shall also acquire, under contract, natural or artificial gas or oil to be used in generating power for pumping purposes; and shall also have the right by purchase or condemnation to acquire rights-of-way for the construction or enlargement of its ditches, canals or reservoirs or power lines or gas mains and also lands for reservoir sites.

The title to all property acquired under the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] shall immediately and by operation of law vest in such irrigation on [sic] district in its corporate name and such property shall be held for the uses and purposes set forth in this act and shall be exempt from all taxation.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 13; C.S. 1929, § 73-713; 1941 Comp., § 77-2413; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-13.

### **73-12-14. Acquire property and rights for district; actions in court; legality of organization of district presumed after one year.**

The said board is hereby authorized and empowered to take conveyances or contracts for all property or rights acquired by it under the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] in the name of such irrigation district to and for the purposes herein expressed, and to institute and maintain any and all actions, proceedings and suits at law or in equity, necessary or proper in order to fully carry out the provisions of this act, or to enforce, maintain, protect or preserve any or all rights, privileges and

immunities created by this act or acquired in pursuance thereof. And in all courts, actions, suits or proceedings the said board may sue, appear and defend in person or by attorneys and in the name of such irrigation district. Judicial notice shall be taken in all actions, suits and proceedings in any court of this state of the organization and existence of any irrigation district in this state now or hereafter organized, from and after the filing for record in the office of the county clerk of the certified copy of the order of the board of county commissioners mentioned in Section 6 [73-12-6 NMSA 1978] of this act; and a certified copy of said order shall be prima facie evidence in all actions, suits and proceedings in any court in this state of the regularity and legal sufficiency of all acts, matters and proceedings therein recited and set forth; and any such irrigation district, in regard to which any such order has been heretofore or may hereafter be entered, and such certified copy thereof so filed for record, and which has exercised or shall exercise rights and powers of such district, and shall have had or shall have in office a board of directors exercising the duties of their office and the legality or regularity of the formation or organization whereof shall not have been questioned by proceedings in quo warranto instituted in the district court of the county in which such district or the greater portion thereof is situated within one year from the date of such filing, shall be conclusively deemed to be a legally and regularly organized, established and existing irrigation district within the meaning of this act, and its due and lawful formation and organization shall not thereafter be questioned in any action, suit or proceeding whether brought under the provisions of this act or otherwise.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 14; C.S. 1929, § 73-714; 1941 Comp., § 77-2414; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-14.

### **73-12-15. Determining cost; bond election; notice; conduct; bond terms and conditions; subsequent issues.**

For the purpose of constructing or purchasing or acquiring the necessary fuel transmission lines, pipelines, power plants, electrical motors, engines, reservoir sites, reservoirs, water rights, water wells, canals, ditches and works, including the necessary drainage works and the acquiring of the necessary property and rights therefor, and for the purpose of paying the first year's interest on the bonds herein authorized and for the purpose of paying legal expenses incurred in the organization of the district and preliminary expenses incurred under the provisions of Section 73-12-12 NMSA 1978 and otherwise carrying out the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], the board of directors of any such district shall, as soon after the district has been organized as may be practicable, estimate and determine the amount of money necessary to be raised for such purposes and shall, by resolution to be entered in the minutes of the board of directors of the district, fix the amounts and series of the bonds of the district proposed to be issued. Provided, however, that none of the bonds shall run for a longer period than twenty years from the date thereof. The board of directors shall forthwith call a special election, at which election shall be submitted to the electors of the district possessing the qualifications prescribed by this act the question if whether or not the bonds of the district shall be issued in the amount so determined. Notice of the election shall be given by publication in some newspaper published in the county

where the office of the board of directors of the district is required to be kept, once a week for at least three successive weeks immediately preceding the date of the election. The notice shall specify the time of holding the election, the amount of bonds proposed to be issued and the series and due dates thereof. The election shall be held and the results thereof determined and declared in all respects as nearly as possible in conformity with the provisions of this act governing the election of directors. Provided that no informalities in conducting the election shall invalidate it if the election has been otherwise fairly conducted. At such election, the ballots shall contain the words "Bonds, Yes" or "Bonds, No" or words equivalent thereto. If a majority of the votes of the qualified electors who are freeholders within the district have been voted "Bonds, Yes," the board of directors shall immediately cause bonds to be issued in amounts and payable in series, as provided in the resolution of the board of directors. Each bond shall bear interest payable semiannually on June 1 and December 1 of each year. The principal and interest shall be payable at the office of the county treasurer of the county in which the organization of the district was effected as aforesaid and at such other place or places, if any, as the board of directors may designate in the bonds. The bonds shall be in such form as the board of directors may determine and, except for bonds issued in book entry or similar form without the delivery of physical securities, shall be executed in the name of the district and signed by the president and secretary, and the seal of the district shall be affixed thereto. The bonds shall be numbered consecutively as issued and bear date at the time of their issue. Any coupons for interest shall be attached to each bond bearing the facsimile signature of the president and the secretary. The bonds shall express on their face that they are issued by authority of this act, stating its title and date of approval. The secretary shall keep a record of the bonds sold, their number, date of sale, the price received and the name of the purchaser. Provided that when the money provided by any previous issue of bonds has become exhausted by expenditures herein authorized therefor and it becomes necessary to raise additional money for such purposes, additional bonds may be issued after submitting the question of issuing the bonds at a special election to the qualified voters of the district and otherwise complying with the provisions of this act in respect to an original issue of bonds. Provided further that the lien for taxes for the payment of the interest and the principal of any bond issue shall be a prior lien to that of any subsequent bond issue.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 15; C.S. 1929, § 73-715; Laws 1931, ch. 133, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2415; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-15; 1983, ch. 265, § 57.

### **73-12-16. Sale of bonds; refunding bonds; use of bonds.**

The board may sell bonds from time to time in amounts necessary and most advantageous to raise money for the construction or purchase of canals, reservoirs, reservoir sites, water rights, water wells and works, power plants, electrical motors, engines, power transmission lines, gas lines or oil lines for the primary purpose of supplying fuel and generating power for pumping purposes and necessary drainage works and otherwise to fully carry out the object and purposes of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978]. Before making any sale, the board shall, at a meeting, by resolution

declare its intention to sell a specified amount of the bonds and the day and hour and place of the sale and shall cause the resolution to be entered in the minutes and notice of the sale to be given by publication thereof by three insertions at least twenty days prior to the sale in a daily newspaper published in the city of Santa Fe and a like notice in a daily newspaper published in the city of Albuquerque and any other newspaper at its discretion. The board shall state that sealed proposals will be received by the board at its office for the purchase of the bonds and tell the day and hour named in the resolution. At the time appointed, the board shall open the proposals and award the purchase of the bonds to the highest responsible bidder and may reject all bids, but said board shall, in no event, sell any of said bonds for less than eighty-five percent of the face value thereof. In case no bid is made and accepted, as above provided, the board of directors is hereby authorized to use the bonds for the purchase or construction of canals, reservoir sites, reservoirs, water rights and works, power plants and transmission lines, oil and gas lines for the primary purpose of generating power for pumping purposes and necessary drainage works, provided such bonds shall not be so disposed of at less than eighty-five percent of the face value thereof.

Refunding bonds may be issued and used by any district organized under the laws of this state for the purpose of retiring any bonds which may have been issued under the provisions of this act after the question of issuing refunding bonds has been submitted to an election as herein provided and has received the affirmative vote of a majority of those voting thereon within the district. The refunding bonds may be payable at the time or times and may be of such denominations as the board of directors may determine and shall be executed in the same manner as provided herein for the original issue of bonds. The board of directors shall have power to contract for the purchase of, and exchange of refunding bonds for, the whole or any part of the bonds to be refunded by the issue. The refunding bonds shall first be deposited with the county treasurer of the county wherein the office of the district is located and shall be delivered only as and when bonds so to be refunded in like amounts are surrendered to the county treasurer for cancellation. The refunding bonds may also be sold from time to time in such amounts as the board of directors may determine and in the same manner as provided for the sale of the original issue of bonds, the proceeds to be deposited with the treasurer to be paid out by him upon order of the board of directors in exchange for any of the outstanding bonds that may be so purchased or contracted for by the board of directors.

The treasurer may use the proceeds at any time in his hands to pay the principal and interest of any matured outstanding bonds presented for payment in case he does not have sufficient funds of the district otherwise provided for paying such maturing bonds.

The treasurer shall cancel all bonds of the district as and when the bonds are paid or refunded and shall cause to be recorded in the office of the county clerk of the county his certificate showing that the bonds, giving dates, serial numbers and amounts thereof, have been paid and cancelled, and such cancelled bonds shall be delivered to the board of directors of the district to be destroyed. It shall be the duty of the board of



directors to destroy such cancelled bonds and to enter upon their records a statement giving the dates, serial numbers and amounts of the bonds so destroyed.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 16; C.S. 1929, § 73-716; Laws 1931, ch. 133, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2416; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-16; 1983, ch. 265, § 58.

### **73-12-17. How revenue raised to pay bonds; service charges within district to be uniform; may use highways.**

Said bonds, and the interest thereon, shall be paid by revenue derived from an annual assessment upon the real property within the district and such real property shall be and remain liable to be assessed and taxed for such payments as herein provided.

Provided that any revenue derived by the district on account of the service charge over and above the amounts required for maintenance and operation of power plant or plants, ditches, canals and general overhead expenses of the district shall be considered "surplus" and covered into the bond fund of the district, and in the succeeding year the board of directors in making up an estimate of assessments to meet the interest on such bonds or the principal on such bonds as may become payable in such year shall take into account the money in said bond fund derived from such "surplus."

The service charges to the electors within the district shall be uniform. The primary object of the district being, the providing of power or fuel for pumping for irrigation purposes and it shall not be lawful to extend such service to points outside of such district except there be a surplus of power over and above the needs for irrigation purposes and other purposes within the district, but the board of directors are authorized to make reasonable contracts with the state of New Mexico, cities and towns, or other municipal corporations of said state and with other persons and corporations to supply such surplus power, if any, or to carry out the construction plans or other plans of organization of the district. Any district organized under this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] shall have the use of public highways, roads, streets and alleys in or outside such district to the extent needed to transmit power or fuel into the district, but such use shall be subject to the primary use of the public to such highways, streets and alleys and shall be under such reasonable conditions and restrictions as may be made by the board of county commissioners in the county in which the same are situated or of the board of trustees or of the city council of such towns and cities in which the same are situated. The said board of directors shall have power to construct, operate, lease and control plants for the generation, distribution, sale, lease and use of electric energy and to construct, operate, lease and control pipelines for the transmission of oil or gas to be used in connection with the purposes for which such district is organized.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 17; C.S. 1929, § 73-717; 1941 Comp., § 77-2417; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-17.

**73-12-18. Certifying requirements to board of county commissioners each year; county commissioners may act [; duties of county treasurer; delinquent accounts; special assessments; disbursements]**

It shall be the duty of the board of directors of the district, on or before September first of each year, to determine the amounts of money required to meet the obligations and the maintenance, operating and current expenses of the district for the ensuing fiscal year, and such additional sums as may be necessary to meet any deficiency for payment of such obligations and expenses theretofore incurred, and to certify the same to the board of county commissioners. Such certificate shall specify the sum required for each of the purposes therein mentioned. The county treasurer shall distribute the proceeds of the taxes levied by the board of county commissioners under this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] to the credit of the separate funds in proportion to the sums specified in said certificate, among which shall be a bond fund for payment of interest and sinking fund or [for] principal of outstanding bonds of the district, and a power and water fund out of which to pay the annual water rentals or charges for water purchased or contracted for by the district from any other district, person or corporation, and to pay for power or fuel contracted for by the district and to pay costs of service, operation, maintenance and taxes on surplus power sold, as hereinafter provided.

If at the time of making and filing the certificate mentioned above there should be due the district, from a landowner within the district, or an agent or lessee of such landowner, any bill for services rendered or for money advanced on account of guarantees furnished by the district, it shall be the duty of the said board of directors to make a list of such delinquent accounts showing the name of the owner of the land and the legal description of the land to which service was rendered, the amount due and delinquent and they shall certify this list to the county assessor who shall place the same on the tax rolls as a special assessment against the particular piece of land to which the service was rendered. Such assessments, when entered on the tax roll shall have the same force and effect as other assessments, and shall constitute a lien on such land.

It shall be unlawful to transfer any money from either the bond fund or the power and water fund, or to use the money therein for any other purposes so long as any obligations of the district, which should be paid out of such funds, respectively remain unpaid.

The county treasurer is authorized to pay out of said bond fund any matured bond or coupon of the district, and to pay out of the power and water fund any charges or rentals for power or water due by the district and unpaid, without warrant signed by the president and secretary of the district in any case where the district officers neglect or refuse to issue such warrants in time to meet such obligations when due.

Should the board of directors fail to certify the amount so needed or should the amount certified to the board of county commissioners be, in the judgment of such

board of county commissioners, insufficient to meet such obligations, then, in that event, the board of county commissioners shall determine the amount of money required to meet such obligations and fix the rate per acre or levy taxes to provide such amount of money.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 18; C.S. 1929, § 73-718; 1941 Comp., § 77-2418; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-18.

### **73-12-19. Duties of county assessor.**

It shall be the duty of the county assessor of any county embracing the whole or a part of any irrigation district to assess and enter upon his tax roll each year the name of the owner and the description, and area of, each tract of land in said district in said county subject to taxation under this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], and to deliver a certified list thereof to the county commissioners of said county and to transmit a like certified list to the county commissioners of the county in which the office of said district is located; and upon receipt by such assessor of the notice from the county commissioners of the levies to be made as hereinafter provided, he shall extend the same upon his tax roll to be collected in the same manner as other taxes; provided, that in no case shall any land be taxed for any purpose under this act which from any natural cause cannot be irrigated by the irrigation system of said district, or is incapable of cultivation: provided further, that such exception from taxation shall not apply to any land until the same shall have been excluded for that purpose by order of the board of directors in a proper proceeding as provided by this act and after a certified copy of such order shall have been filed for record in the office of the county clerk of the county wherein such lands are situate.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 19; C.S. 1929, § 73-719; 1941 Comp., § 77-2419; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-19.

### **73-12-20. Board of county commissioners to fix rate per-acre levy.**

It shall be the duty of the county commissioners of the county in which is located the office of any irrigation district, immediately upon receipt of the said certified list of the lands in said district subject to tax hereunder, and upon the receipt of the certificate of the said board of directors certifying the total amount of money required to be raised as herein provided to fix the rate per acre of levy necessary to provide said amount of money, and to fix the rate per acre necessary to provide the amount of money required to pay the interest and principal of the bonds of said district as the same shall become due; also to fix the rate per acre necessary to provide the amount of money required for any other purposes as in this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] provided, and which are to be raised by the levy of taxes upon the lands of said district; and to certify said respective levies to the county commissioners of each other county embracing any portion of said district. The rate of levy necessary to raise the required amount of money for said district shall be increased fifteen percent to cover delinquencies. For the purpose of said district, it shall be the duty of the county commissioners of each county

in which any irrigation district is located in whole or in part, at the time of making levy for county purposes, to make a levy, as above provided, upon all lands in said district within their respective counties subject to taxation under this act and to deliver a notice to the county assessor thereof.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 20; C.S. 1929, § 73-720; 1941 Comp., § 77-2420; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-20.

### **73-12-21. Duties of county treasurer.**

The county treasurer of the county in which is located the office of any irrigation district, shall be and is hereby constituted ex-officio district treasurer of said district, and said county treasurer shall be liable upon his official bond and to indictment and criminal prosecution, for malfeasance, misfeasance or failure to perform any duty herein prescribed as county treasurer or district treasurer, as is provided by law in other cases as county treasurer. Said treasurer shall receive and receipt for all moneys belonging to said district. It shall be the duty of the county treasurer in each county in which any irrigation district is located, in whole or in part, to collect and receipt for all taxes levied as herein provided, in the same manner and at the same time as is required in the receipt for and collection of taxes upon real estate for county purposes; provided, that such county treasurer shall receive in payment of the district bond fund taxes above mentioned for the year in which said taxes were levied, interest coupons or bonds issued by said irrigation districts maturing within said year, the same as so much lawful money of the United States, if such interest coupons do not exceed the amount of district bond fund taxes which the person tendering the same owes. The county treasurer of each county comprising a portion only of any irrigation district, excepting the county treasurer of the county in which the office of said district is located, on the first Monday of every month, shall remit to the district treasurer aforesaid all moneys, bonds and coupons theretofore collected or received by him on account of said district. Every county treasurer shall keep a bond fund account and a general fund account. The bond fund shall consist of all moneys received on account of interest and principal of the bonds issued by said district, said accounts for interest and principal each to be kept separate. The general fund shall consist of all moneys received. The district treasurer aforesaid shall pay out of said bond fund, when due, the interest and principal of the bonds of said district, at the time and at the place specified in said bonds, and shall pay out of said general fund only upon warrants signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary of said district, as herein provided. The district treasurer, on the fifteenth day of each month shall report to the board of directors of said district the amount of money in his hands to the credit of the respective funds above provided. All such district taxes collected and paid to the county treasurers as aforesaid shall be received by said treasurers in their official capacity and they shall be responsible for the safekeeping, disbursement and payment thereof the same as for other moneys collected by them as such treasurers; provided, said county treasurer shall not receive any commission for the collection of said district taxes or any extra compensation for acting as such district treasurer other than the regular salary as such county treasurer but the district may pay to such treasurer for clerical assistance a sum not to exceed

twenty dollars (\$20.00) per month for each five thousand acres or major fraction thereof in such district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 21; C.S. 1929, § 73-721; 1941 Comp., § 77-2421; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-21.

### **73-12-22. Revenue laws of state to govern; may refuse service to delinquents.**

The revenue laws of this state for the assessment, levying and collection of taxes on real estate for county purposes, except as herein modified, shall be applicable for the purposes, of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], including the enforcement of penalties and forfeitures for delinquent taxes. All interest that may be collected on delinquent taxes levied and assessed for district purposes under the provisions of Chapter 41, Laws of 1919, and all interest from that source in hands of county treasurers shall be credited to the several district funds in proportion to the amounts thereof as certified by the board of directors of such district.

In addition to such penalties and forfeitures the board of directors of each district is hereby authorized to refuse during any current year, to deliver water from the canals and reservoirs of the district, or purchased from any other district, person or corporation, to any land for irrigation thereof or domestic use thereon, so long as any taxes assessed and levied for district purposes against such land, or any interest, cost or penalties accrued thereon, are due, delinquent and unpaid.

In case the lists or certificates in this act required to be made as the basis for the tax levy for district purposes shall not be made within the time in this act prescribed, or in case such levy is not made or certified by the board of county commissioners before the tax roll is made up for any year, such lists and certificates shall nevertheless be made and such levy made and extended on the tax roll with the same effect as if made within the time prescribed by law. It shall be the duty of the board of directors to purchase in the name of such district any property which may be sold for delinquent taxes under this act, and said board is authorized to take title to such land in the name of the district, and to sell and convey the same when it has acquired title thereto, at a price not less than the taxes, penalty and interest accrued thereon.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 22; C.S. 1929, § 73-722; 1941 Comp., § 77-2422; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-22.

### **73-12-23. Construction and material contracts to be let to lowest bidder.**

After adopting a plan for the construction of power plants, transmission lines, pipelines, canals, reservoirs and works, the board of directors shall give notice, by publication thereof, not less than twenty days in a newspaper published in each of the counties into which any such irrigation district extends, provided a newspaper is

published therein, and in such other newspapers as they may deem advisable, calling for bids for the construction of said work or any portion thereof; if less than the whole work is advertised, then the portion so advertised must be particularly described in such notice; said notice shall set forth that plans and specifications can be seen at the office of the board, and that the board will receive sealed proposals therefor, and that the contract will be let to the lowest responsible bidder, stating the time and the place for opening the proposals, which at said time and place shall be opened in public, and as soon as convenient thereafter the board shall let said work, either in portions or as a whole, to the lowest responsible bidder, or they may reject any or all bids and readvertise for proposals or may proceed to construct the work under their own superintendence.

Contracts for the purchase of material shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. The person or persons to whom a contract may be awarded shall enter into a bond with good and sufficient sureties, to be approved by the board, payable to said district for its use, for not less than ten percent of the amount of the contract price, conditioned for the faithful performance of said contract. The work shall be done under the direction and to the satisfaction of the engineer in charge subject to the approval of the board.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 23; C.S. 1929, § 73-723; 1941 Comp., § 77-2423; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-23.

### **73-12-24. Payment of claim; when warrants to issue; claims to be verified; record to be kept.**

No claims shall be paid by the district treasurer until the same shall have been allowed by the board, and only upon warrants signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary, which warrants shall state the date authorized by the board and for what purpose; provided, no warrant shall be issued or obligation incurred unless the district treasurer has sufficient funds on hand to pay such warrant when it is presented for payment. All claims against the district shall be verified and the secretary of the district is hereby authorized and empowered to administer oath to the parties verifying said claims, the same as the county clerk or a notary public might do. The district treasurer shall keep a register in which he shall enter each warrant as issued and as presented for payment showing the date and amount of such warrant, to whom payable, the date of the presentation for payment, the date of payment and all warrants shall be paid in the order of their presentation for payment to the district treasurer. All warrants shall be drawn payable to the claimant or bearer, the same as county warrants.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 24; C.S. 1929, § 73-724; 1941 Comp., § 77-2424; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-24.

### **73-12-25. [Service charges to pay operation and maintenance; tax levy; employment of electrician or mechanic.]**

For the purpose of defraying the expenses of the organization of the district and the care, operation, management, repair and improvements of all canals, ditches, reservoirs, water wells, power plants, electrical motors, engines, power plants, transmission lines, pipelines and other works including drainage works and including salaries of officers and employees and for rental of [or] charges for water, power or fuel supplied to said district under any contract with owners of other irrigation works or power plants, or transmission lines or pipelines, the board may fix rates of tolls and charges and collect the same of all persons using such canals, ditches, water for irrigation or power or fuel for irrigation, or other purposes, or may provide in whole or in part payment of such expenditures by levy of taxes therefor, as hereinbefore provided, or by both tolls and taxes. In case the money raised be insufficient and in case bonds be unavailable for the construction or completion of any works in accordance with plans adopted, it shall be the duty of the board of directors to provide for the completion by causing the levy of a tax therefor in the same manner in which levy of taxes is made for the other purposes provided for in this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978].

The board of directors may employ an expert electrician or mechanic to keep all electrical motors, engines and pumps and other service properties in good repair, so as to produce the maximum efficiency.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 25; C.S. 1929, § 73-725; Laws 1931, ch. 133, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2425; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-25.

### **73-12-26. Right of eminent domain.**

The board of directors shall have the power to construct the said works across any stream of water, watercourse, street, avenue, highway, railway, canal, ditch or flume which the route of said canal or canals, power, transmission or pipelines may intersect or cross; and if said board and the owners or controllers of the property so to be crossed cannot agree on the amount to be paid therefor, or as to the points or the matter of said crossings, the same shall be ascertained and determined in all respects as is provided by law in respect to the taking of land for public uses. The right-of-way is hereby granted to locate, construct and maintain said works or reservoirs, over, through or upon any of the lands which are now, or may be the property of the state.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 26; C.S. 1929, § 73-726; 1941 Comp., § 77-2426; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-26.

### **73-12-27. Compensation of board; members may not be interested in any contract.**

The board of directors shall each receive compensation at the rate of two and one-half dollars (\$2.50) per day while attending meetings, and their actual and necessary expenses while engaged in official business. The salary of the secretary shall not exceed eight hundred dollars (\$800) per annum. No director or any officer named in this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] shall, in any manner, be interested, directly or

indirectly, in any contract awarded or to be awarded by the board, or in the profits to be derived therefrom; nor shall such director or officer receive any bonus, gratuity or bribe; and for any violation of this provision any such director or officer shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and upon conviction thereof shall forfeit his office, and be punished by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) or by imprisonment in the penitentiary not exceeding five years nor less than one year.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 27; C.S. 1929, § 73-727; 1941 Comp., § 77-2427; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-27.

### **73-12-28. Board of directors have no power to incur debt other than provided in this act.**

The board of directors, or other officers of the district, shall have no power to incur any debt or liability whatever either by issuing bonds or otherwise, in excess of the express provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], and any debt or liability incurred in excess of such express provisions shall be and remain absolutely void.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 28; C.S. 1929, § 73-728; 1941 Comp., § 77-2428; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-28.

### **73-12-29. Manner of distribution of power or water.**

In case the volume of water in any canal, reservoir or other works or in case the volume of power or fuel in any district shall not be sufficient to supply the continual wants of the entire district and all lands susceptible of irrigation therein, then it shall be the duty of the board of directors to distribute all available water, power or fuel upon certain or alternate days to different users or localities, as they may in their judgment think best, for the interest of all parties concerned, provided, however, that power or fuel for the production of power shall be first served to the fullest extent practicable for use in pumping of water for irrigation.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 29; C.S. 1929, § 73-729; 1941 Comp., § 77-2429; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-29.

### **73-12-30. Prior water rights not affected.**

Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to authorize any person to divert the waters of any river, creek, stream, canal or reservoir to the detriment of any person having a prior right to the waters of such river, creek, stream, canal or reservoir.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 30; C.S. 1929, § 73-730; 1941 Comp., § 77-2430; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-30.



### **73-12-31. Boundaries may be changed, but such change shall not affect obligations incurred.**

The boundaries of any irrigation district now or hereafter organized under the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], may be changed in the manner herein prescribed; but such change of the boundaries of the district shall not impair or affect its organization, or its rights in or to property or any of its rights or privileges of whatsoever kind or nature, nor shall it affect, impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge for or upon which it or the owner of lands therein were or might become liable or chargeable had such change of its boundaries not been made.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 31; C.S. 1929, § 73-731; 1941 Comp., § 77-2431; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-31.

### **73-12-32. Petition for inclusion of land.**

The holder or holders of title, or evidence of title, or [of] any body of land adjacent to or situate within the boundaries of any irrigation district, may file with the board of directors of said district a petition in writing, praying that such lands be included in such district. The petition shall describe the tracts, or body of land owned by the petitioners, but such description need not be more particular than is required when such lands are entered by the county assessor in the assessment book. Such petition shall be deemed to give the assent of the petitioners to the inclusion of [in] such district of the lands described in the petition and such petition must be acknowledged in the same manner that conveyances of land are required to be acknowledged.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 32; C.S. 1929, § 73-732; 1941 Comp., § 77-2432; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-32.

### **73-12-33. Notice of application for inclusion of land to be published.**

The secretary of the board of directors shall cause notice of the filing of such petition to be given and published once a week for three successive weeks in a newspaper published in the county where the office of said board is situate, which notice shall state the filing of such petition and the names of the petitioners; a description of the lands mentioned in the petition, and the prayer of said petitioners; giving notice to all persons interested, to appear at the office of said board at a time named in said notice, and show cause, in writing, if any they have, why the petition should not be granted. The time specified in the notice at which it shall be required to show cause shall be the regular meeting of the board next after the expiration of the time for the publication of the notice. The petitioner or petitioners shall advance to the secretary sufficient money to pay the estimated cost of all proceedings under such petition before the secretary shall be required to give such notice.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 33; C.S. 1929, § 73-733; 1941 Comp., § 77-2433; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-33.

### **73-12-34. Hearing on petition for inclusion of land.**

The board of directors, at the time and place mentioned in said notice, or at such time or times to which the hearing of such petition may be adjourned, shall proceed to hear the petition, and all objections thereto, presented in writing by any person showing cause as aforesaid why said petition should not be granted. The failure of any person interested to show cause, in writing, as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken as an assent on his part to the inclusion of such lands in said district as prayed for in said petition.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 34; C.S. 1929, § 73-734; 1941 Comp., § 77-2434; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-34.

### **73-12-35. Terms on which lands may be included.**

The board of directors to whom such petition is presented may require as a condition precedent to the granting of the same that the petitioners shall severally pay to such district such respective sums, as nearly as the same can be estimated by the board, as said petitioners or their grantors would have been required to pay for their pro rata share of all bonds and the interest thereon which may have previously thereto be [been] issued by said district had such lands been included in such district at the time the same was originally formed or when said bonds were so issued; and said board may require such petitioners to pay for such further sums as the board may deem just on account of irrigation works or water rights paid for otherwise than by issue of bonds.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 35; C.S. 1929, § 73-735; 1941 Comp., § 77-2435; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-35.

### **73-12-36. Action of board on petition to include land; order describing new boundaries; electors may protest.**

The board of directors if they deem it not for the best interests of the district to include therein the lands mentioned in the petition, shall by order reject the said petition, but if they deem it for the best interests of the district that said lands be included the board may order that the district be so changed as to include therein the lands mentioned in the said petition. The order shall describe the entire boundaries of the district with the lands so included, if the district boundaries be changed thereby, and for that purpose the board may cause a survey to be made of such portion of such boundaries as may be deemed necessary; provided, if within thirty days from the making of such order a majority of the qualified electors of the district protest in writing to said board against the inclusion of such lands, in said district, said order shall be held for naught and said lands shall not be included therein.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 36; C.S. 1929, § 73-736; 1941 Comp., § 77-2436; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-36.

### **73-12-37. Board to transmit order and plat of new boundaries to county clerk.**

Upon the allowance of such petition and in case no protest has been filed with the board within thirty days after the entry of said order as aforesaid, a certified copy of the order of the board of directors making such change, and a plat of such district showing such change, certified by the president and secretary, shall be filed for record in the office of the county clerk of each county in which are situate any of the lands of the district, and the district shall remain an irrigation district as fully to all intents and purposes as if the lands which are included in the district by the change aforesaid had been included therein at the organization of the district; and said district as so changed and all the lands therein shall be liable for all existing obligations and indebtedness of the organized district.

Upon the filing of the order and the plat, as herein mentioned, copies thereof, certified by said county clerk, shall be admissible in evidence to prove the inclusion of said lands in said district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 37; C.S. 1929, § 73-737; 1941 Comp., § 77-2437; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-37.

### **73-12-38. Authority to sign petition of protest.**

A guardian, conservator or personal representative of an estate, who is appointed as such under the laws of this state, and who, as such guardian, conservator or personal representative is entitled to the possession of the lands belonging to the estate which he represents, may on behalf of his ward or the estate which he represents, upon being thereunto authorized by the proper court, sign any petition or protest in this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] mentioned, and may show cause, as in this act mentioned, why the boundaries of the district should not be changed or additional lands included therein.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 38; C.S. 1929, § 73-738; 1941 Comp., § 77-2438; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-38; Laws 1975, ch. 257, § 8-131.

### **73-12-39. Board may redivide district for election purposes [after inclusion of land].**

In case of the inclusion of any lands within any district by proceedings under this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] the board of directors, shall, if they deem necessary, at least thirty days prior to the next succeeding regular election, make an order redividing such district into three divisions, as nearly equal in size as may be practicable, and one director shall thereafter be elected for each division as hereinbefore provided.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 39; C.S. 1929, § 73-739; 1941 Comp., § 77-2439; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-39.

### **73-12-40. Land may be excluded from district.**

Any tract of land included within the boundaries of any such district, at or after its organization under the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], may be excluded therefrom, in the manner herein prescribed, but such exclusion of land from the district shall not impair or affect its organization, or its rights in or to property or any of its rights or privileges of whatever kind or nature; nor shall such exclusion affect, impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge for or upon which the district or the land so excluded is liable or chargeable, at the time such land is excluded from the district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 40; C.S. 1929, § 73-740; 1941 Comp., § 77-2440; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-40.

### **73-12-41. Owner shall file petition for exclusion.**

The owner or owners in fee of any lands constituting a portion of any irrigation district may file with the board of directors of the district, a petition praying that such lands may be excluded and taken from said district. The petition shall describe the lands which the petitioners desire to have excluded, but the description of such lands need not be more particular than required when lands are entered in the assessment book by the county assessor. Such petition must be acknowledged in the same manner and form as is required in case of a conveyance of land.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 41; C.S. 1929, § 73-741; 1941 Comp., § 77-2441; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-41.

### **73-12-42. Publish notice of petition for exclusion.**

The secretary of the board of directors shall cause a notice of the filing of such petition to be published for at least three weeks in some newspaper published in the county where the office of the board of directors is situated, and if any portion of said district lie within another county or counties, then said notice shall be so published in a newspaper published within each of said counties. The notice shall state the filing of such petition, the names of the petitioners, description of the lands mentioned in said petition and the prayer of said petitioners; and it shall notify all persons interested to appear at the office of said board at a time named in said notice, and show cause in writing, if any they have, why said petition should not be granted. The time to be specified in the notice at which they shall be required to show cause shall be the regular meeting of the board next after the expiration of the time for the publication of the notice. The petitioner or petitioners shall advance to the secretary sufficient money to pay the estimated cost of all proceedings under such petition before the secretary shall give such notice.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 42; C.S. 1929, § 73-742; 1941 Comp., § 77-2442; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-42.

### **73-12-43. Board shall consider petition for exclusion.**

The board of directors at the time and place mentioned in the notice, or at the time or times to which the hearing of said petition may be adjourned, shall proceed to hear the petition and all objections thereto presented in writing by any person showing cause as aforesaid why the prayer of said petition should not be granted. The filing of such petition with such board, as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken as an assent by each and all of such petitioners, to the exclusion from such district of the lands mentioned in the petition, or any part thereof.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 43; C.S. 1929, § 73-743; 1941 Comp., § 77-2443; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-43.

### **73-12-44. Board shall act on petition for exclusion.**

The board of directors, if they deem it not for the best interest of the district that the lands mentioned in the petition or any portion thereof should be excluded from said district shall order that said petition be denied; but if they deem it for the best interest of the district that the lands mentioned in the petition, or some portion thereof, be excluded from the district, and if there are no outstanding bonds of the district, then the board may order the lands mentioned in the petition, or some defined portion thereof, to be excluded from the district; provided, if within thirty days from the making of such order a majority of the qualified electors of the district protest in writing to said board against the exclusion of such lands from said district, said order shall be held for naught and such lands shall not be excluded therefrom.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 44; C.S. 1929, § 73-744; 1941 Comp., § 77-2444; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-44.

### **73-12-45. Order making change and plat to be transmitted to county clerk.**

Upon the allowance of such petition and in case no protest has been filed with the board within thirty days after the entry of said order as aforesaid, a certified copy of the order of the board of directors making such change and a plat of such district showing such change, certified by the president and secretary, shall be filed for record in the office of the county clerk, of each county in which are situate any of the lands of the district, and the district shall remain an irrigation district as fully to all intents and purposes as if the lands which are excluded by the change aforesaid, had not been excluded therefrom.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 45; C.S. 1929, § 73-745; 1941 Comp., § 77-2445; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-45.

**73-12-46. Board may redivide district for election purposes [after exclusion of land].**

At least thirty days before the next regular election of such district the board of directors thereof may, if they deem it necessary, make an order redividing said district into three divisions, as nearly equal in size as practicable, and one director shall be elected for each division as hereinbefore provided.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 46; C.S. 1929, § 73-746; 1941 Comp., § 77-2446; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-46.

**73-12-47. Supervision of electrical and mechanical appliances; schedules for use of power; regulations of quantity of water to be pumped.**

The board may employ a competent engineer or mechanic whose duty it shall be to supervise the operation and maintenance of all power plants, transmission lines, motors, engines, pumps and all electrical and mechanical appliances installed by the district and may, through such engineer or otherwise, provide engineering, electrical, mechanical, irrigation and agricultural assistance and instruction to owners of lands within the district.

The board shall in its printed rules relating to the service provide schedules for irrigation by the several owners of land so as to evenly and equitably distribute the power-load and may establish rules as to the amount of water to be pumped from each of such wells in conjunction with any state authority that may now or later be vested with jurisdiction of the appropriation of water from subsurface streams or reservoirs, in order to control, as far as practicable, the water level of such subsurface streams or reservoirs, and to avoid excessive pumping which might increase the pumping cost beyond the point of efficiency.

Said board shall also have the jurisdiction and authority to stop the waste of water in such district. The board may refuse service to owners of land unless and until such owners conform to such rules so established by the board in their use of such power and water.

All such rules must be reasonable and are subject to correction by action of any person affected thereby in the district court.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 47; C.S. 1929, § 73-747; 1941 Comp., § 77-2447; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-47.

### **73-12-48. District shall pay tax on gross revenue derived from sales of surplus power.**

Any district organized under the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] shall be taxed in the sum of four percent (4%) of the gross revenue derived from the sale of surplus power, which amount shall be paid into the county treasury of the county in which such district is organized to the credit of the county road fund.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 48; C.S. 1929, § 73-748; 1941 Comp., § 77-2448; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-48.

### **73-12-49. Petition for dissolution of district; election thereon.**

Whenever a majority of the resident freeholders, representing a majority of the number of acres of the land included in any irrigation district organized or hereafter to be organized under this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], shall petition the board of directors to call a special election for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of said irrigation district a proposition to vote on the question of dissolution of said irrigation district, setting forth in said petition that all obligations, bills and claims of every nature whatsoever have been fully satisfied and paid, it shall be the duty of said directors, if they shall be satisfied that all obligations, claims and bills have been fully satisfied, to call an election, setting forth the object of the said election, and to cause notice of said election to be published in some newspaper in each of the counties in which any part of said district is located, for a period of thirty (30) days next prior to said election, setting forth the time and place for holding said election in each of the voting precincts in said district. It shall also be the duty of the directors to prepare ballots to be used at said election on which shall be written or printed words: "For Dissolution - Yes," and "For Dissolution - No."

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 49; C.S. 1929, § 73-749; 1941 Comp., § 77-2449; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-49.

### **73-12-50. Vote on dissolution to be canvassed.**

The board of directors shall name a day for canvassing the vote, and if it shall appear that a majority of said ballots contain the words, "For Dissolution - Yes," then it shall be the duty of said board of directors to make and cause to be entered upon their records an order declaring said district to be dissolved and to certify a copy of said order to the county clerk of each county wherein any part of said district is situated. And clerks shall record all such certificates in the records of the respective counties. Should it appear that a majority of the votes cast at said election were "For Dissolution - No," then the board of directors shall declare the proposition lost and shall cause the result to be made a part of the records of said irrigation district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 50; C.S. 1929, § 73-750; 1941 Comp., § 77-2450; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-50.

### **73-12-51. Confirmation proceedings may be brought.**

The board of directors of any irrigation district purporting to be organized under this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978], may commence special proceeding [proceedings] in and by which the proceedings of said board and of the county commissioners for the organization of said district and for the authorizing of the issuance and sale of the bonds of said district, whether said bonds or any of them have or have not been sold or disposed of, may be judicially examined, determined, approved and confirmed, and the validity of said bonds determined, and in which proceedings there shall likewise be determined the question of benefits received by the land of any landowner owning land within said district, and as to whether or not such land of any such landowner will receive benefits equivalent to the taxes which may be necessary to be levied against his lands in order to provide funds for the payment of the bonds of district, including the amounts to be levied thereon for the purpose of paying delinquencies, as provided in Section 20 of Chapter 41, Laws of 1919 [73-9-26 NMSA 1978], as amended by Section 3 of this act.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 51; C.S. 1929, § 73-751; 1941 Comp., § 77-2451; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-51.

### **73-12-52. Petition to be filed in district court.**

The board of directors of the irrigation district shall file in the district court of the county in which the lands of the district, or some portion thereof, are situated, a petition stating briefly the facts concerning the organization of the district, a description of the boundaries of the district, the amount of the bond issue, the rate of interest, the series in which the bonds mature, the amount of the taxes necessary to be levied upon each acre of land in the district and the amount which may be levied to cover delinquencies, and praying that the proceedings, including the question of benefits, may be examined, determined, approved and confirmed by the court. The petition shall state the facts showing the proceedings leading up to the issue of said bonds, but the petition need not state in detail the facts showing such organization or the election of said board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 52; C.S. 1929, § 73-752; 1941 Comp., § 77-2452; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-52.

### **73-12-53. Court to fix time for hearing and publish notice thereof.**

The court shall fix the time for the hearing of said petition and shall order the clerk of the court to give and publish a notice of the filing of such petition. The notice shall be published for three successive weeks in a newspaper published in the county where the office of the district is situated. The notice shall state the time and place fixed for the hearing of the petition and the prayer of the petitioners, and that any person interested in the organization of said district or in the proceedings for the issue or sale of said bonds, or the benefits received or the tax necessary to be levied, may on or before the



day fixed for the hearing of said petition, demur to or answer said petition. The petition may be referred to and described in said notice as the petition of the board of directors of . . . . . (giving its name), praying that the proceedings for the issue and sale of said bonds of said district and benefits received may be examined, determined, approved and confirmed by the court.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 53; C.S. 1929, § 73-753; 1941 Comp., § 77-2453; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-53.

### **73-12-54. Provisions of Civil Code shall apply; effect of findings of court.**

The provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure respecting the demurrer and answer to a verified complaint shall be applicable to a demurrer and answer to said petition. The person so demurring and answering said petition shall be the defendant to the special proceedings, and the board of directors shall be the plaintiff. Every material statement of the petition not specifically controverted by the answer shall, for the purpose of said special proceedings, be taken as true, and every person failing to answer the petition shall, in case said bonds are declared by the court to be valid and the benefits received equal to the taxes necessary to be levied, be estopped from thereafter questioning the legality of the organization of the district, that the benefits received equal the taxes necessary to be levied, or the validity of said bonds in any proceeding. The rules of pleading and practice relating to appeals and writs of error provided by the Code of Civil Procedure which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] are applicable to the special proceedings herein provided for.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 54; C.S. 1929, § 73-754; 1941 Comp., § 77-2454; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-54.

### **73-12-55. The court's findings of fact and conclusions of law; judgment res judicata.**

Upon the hearing of such special proceedings the court shall find and determine whether the notice of the filing of the petition has been duly published for the time and in the manner in this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] prescribed, and shall have power and jurisdiction to examine and determine the legality and validity of, and approve and confirm, each and all of the proceedings for the organization of said district, including the question of benefits received by each and every tract of land within said district, under the provisions of this act, from and including the petition for the organization of the district, and all other proceedings which may affect the legality or validity of said bonds, the order of sale and the sale thereof, and benefits received by each and every tract of land within said district. The court may make a general order determining the question of benefits, except as to the issue raised by any landowner appearing, in which event there shall be a definite and specific finding as to benefits received by the land owned by such appearing landowner. The court in inquiring into the question of benefits received, the regularity, legality or correctness of said proceedings,

must disregard any error, irregularity or omission, which does not affect the substantial rights of the parties to said special proceedings, or others whose rights or interests are involved in such proceedings. Upon issue joined the court shall hear the evidence, and the court may, by decree, determine the question of benefits and approve and confirm such proceedings in part, and disapprove and declare illegal or invalid other or subsequent parts thereof.

If the court finds that such proceedings have been legal and valid, and that the lands within said district will be benefited to an amount equal to the bonds proposed to be issued, and the tax necessary to be levied for the payment thereof and delinquencies thereon, as in this act provided, it shall, by decree, approve and confirm the same and declare the tax to be levied and the bonds issued and sold or to be issued or sold thereunder, to be valid. And if the court finds any part of such proceedings for the organization of the district, or for the levy of the tax, or for the issue and sale of bonds or other purposes of the district to be illegal, invalid or insufficient, it may direct such proceedings or action to be taken as will remedy the defects in the former proceedings. And upon presentation to the court of satisfactory evidence that such action or proceedings have been duly taken as directed the court may by its decree approve and confirm said proceedings and declare said bonds to be valid. The costs of the special proceedings may be allowed and apportioned between the parties in the discretion of the court.

The judgment or decree when finally made and entered shall be res judicata in all cases arising in connection with the organization of the district and the levy and collection of taxes for payment of the principal or interest of the bonds or of moneys due under contracts or obligations of the district, including the question of benefits received by each tract of land within said district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 55; C.S. 1929, § 73-755; 1941 Comp., § 77-2455; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-55.

### **73-12-56. ["Electrical district" defined.]**

Whenever the words ". . . . . Electrical District" are used in this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978] it shall be held to mean and include only the lands described in the official order establishing said district and the official order including additional lands therein, if any, on record in the office of the county clerk and property and rights acquired by the district.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 56; C.S. 1929, § 73-756; 1941 Comp., § 77-2456; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-56.

### **73-12-57. Provisions of Chapter 20, Acts of 1925, relating to certification board, shall apply to this act.**

The provisions of Chapter 20, of the Sessions Acts of 1925, being an act "relating to bonds of irrigation and conservancy districts, providing under what circumstances such bonds shall be legal investments for funds of banks in which companies and trust companies, trust funds and permanent funds derived from the sale of lands that may have been or may hereafter be granted to the state or any money or fund which may now or hereafter be invested in bonds, of cities, counties, school districts or municipalities and providing under what circumstances the use of irrigation and conservancy districts as security for the performance of any act may be authorized and provided that such bonds may be deposited to secure public money deposited in banks in the state of New Mexico," is hereby extended and made to apply also to electrical irrigation districts organized under this act [73-12-1 to 73-12-57 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 76, § 57; C.S. 1929, § 73-757; 1941 Comp., § 77-2457; 1953 Comp., § 75-25-57.

## **ARTICLE 13**

### **General Provisions Relating to Irrigation Districts**

#### **73-13-1. [Office of district.]**

That the office of all irrigation districts shall be in the county where the lands of said district, or some part thereof, are situate.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 181, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2501; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-1.

#### **73-13-2. [Location determined by board of directors.]**

The board of directors of each such district shall determine where the office of said district shall be and may change the location of such office, from time to time, in such manner as, in their opinion, will best serve the purposes of said district and convenience of the property owners therein.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 181, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2502; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-2.

#### **73-13-3. [Power to deal in lands and water rights.]**

The directors of any irrigation district, now organized or which may be hereafter organized under the laws of the state of New Mexico, shall have power to purchase, hold, use, control, operate, sell, convey, lease and otherwise acquire and deal in lands and water rights, and any and all interests therein, in the name and for the use of the district, whenever, in their judgment such action shall be for the benefit of the district.

**History:** Laws 1925, ch. 139, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-601; 1941 Comp., § 77-2503; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-3.

#### **73-13-4. Transfer water from one tract to another tract owned by district.**

Upon the application of any landowner in the district or upon its own motion, the board of directors of any such district may transfer any water rights appurtenant to lands held by or within such district, which for any cause are not suitable for irrigation or capable of being properly irrigated, to any other lands held by or within such district and which, in their judgment may be profitably and advantageously irrigated. Said action shall be taken by first publishing a notice in any newspaper published within the county where the office of said district is located, of the board's intention to consider a resolution setting a time and place thereof, which resolution shall have for its purpose the transfer of such water rights from certain lands described in said notice to certain other lands described in said notice, and the reason for such transfer. At such time and place protest or protests from any person or persons interested may be heard and thereafter said board of directors shall take formal action upon said resolution. Any protestant or protestants may appeal direct to the district court from any action taken by said board upon said resolution, provided said appeal be taken and notice thereof served within ten (10) days from the date of the adoption or rejection of such resolution.

Such appeal when so taken to the district court, shall be heard de novo and in all matters the same as appeals from justice of the peace courts [magistrate courts], except that no right of trial by jury shall be allowed.

**History:** Laws 1925, ch. 139, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 73-602; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 14; 1941 Comp., § 77-2504; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-4.

#### **73-13-5. [State engineer notified of transfer.]**

That when, acting under the provisions of Section 73-602 of the New Mexico Statutes Annotated as amended by Section 14 of Chapter 8 of the Special Session Laws of 1934 [73-13-4 NMSA 1978], the board of directors of any irrigation district shall have transferred water rights to lands other than those to which such water rights had theretofore been appurtenant, the secretary of said board shall immediately certify and file with the state engineer, a true copy of the board's resolution and action effecting such transfer. And in case of an appeal from such action of said board, the clerk of the district court, without charge or cost, shall immediately file with said state engineer a certified copy of the judgment of court entered in said appeal.

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 41, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2505; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-5.

#### **73-13-6. [Assessments on transfer of water rights.]**

Whenever water rights shall be transferred, under the provisions of this act [73-13-3, 73-13-4, 73-13-6, 73-13-7 NMSA 1978], from lands which are subject to any assessment for the payment of any outstanding bonds or other obligations of the district, the lands to which such water rights are transferred shall be subject to the same

assessment or assessments from the date of such transfer. Such lands shall also be charged, from the date of transfer with assessments levied for the maintenance of the irrigation system or systems of the district, and for the general expenses of the district, in the same proportion as other lands in the district.

**History:** Laws 1925, ch. 139, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 73-603; 1941 Comp., § 77-2506; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-6.

### **73-13-7. [Bondholders may be authorized to appoint director.]**

Whenever the board of directors of an irrigation district are authorized to issue bonds of the district, or refunding bonds, and have issued or are about to issue such bonds, said board shall be authorized to enter into a contract with the purchasers of said bonds, or with the financial agency which may undertake or have in charge the sale thereof, that so long as any of such bonds remain outstanding, the owners of two-thirds in principal amount of said bonds may appoint one as director of said district. Such appointment shall be made by a written statement, in duplicate, signed by the owners of two-thirds of said bonds, showing the number, series, par value and date of issue of each bond owned or held by each respectively, and appointing such person as may be provided by such contract to be member of the board of directors of said district. One of such duplicate statements shall be filed with the board of directors of the district and entered in full upon the minutes of its next meeting, and the other with the county clerk. Directors so appointed shall not be required to have any other qualifications than those herein or in said duplicate statement provided but shall take the oath and give any bond required by law. They shall have the same powers, duties and liabilities as other directors of the district but shall receive no compensation for their services.

**History:** Laws 1925, ch. 139, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 73-604; 1941 Comp., § 77-2507; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-7.

### **73-13-8. Borrowing money; limitations.**

In addition to the powers and authority, and including districts organized for the purpose of cooperating with the government of the United States under the terms of the federal reclamation law and other federal laws now vested in irrigation districts organized and existing under the laws of New Mexico, irrigation districts, through their respective boards of directors are hereby authorized and empowered to borrow money upon the income, credit and assets of such district and pledge the credit, income and assets thereof to secure the same, provided that no such loan shall exceed the sum of thirty dollars (\$30.00) per acre for each acre of irrigated land within such district; if said loan exceeds one thousand dollars (\$1,000) the same shall be authorized or approved in writing by landowners who own in excess of fifty-one percent of the lands irrigated and assessed by the district for district purposes, as such ownership and acreage be shown by the records of such district as certified by the secretary and president of said district and which said certificate or certificates shall be considered sufficient and conclusive as to the amount of such total irrigated acreage, and of the assent of the

landowners authorizing or approving such loan; and after securing the said approval in writing of the landowners, the board of directors of any such district making any such loan is hereby authorized and empowered to execute, make and deliver, in the name of and for and on behalf of such district, notes, debentures, mortgages or pledges, or other form of obligation as shall by the board of directors be deemed for the best interest of such district.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2508; Laws 1943, ch. 41, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-8; Laws 1957, ch. 135, § 1.

### **73-13-9. [Security for loan; repayment; special assessments.]**

The board of directors of any district securing or to secure any loan hereunder shall have power and authority to pledge and/or mortgage the income, assets and property of said district, and are authorized and empowered, and it shall be the duty of said board, to make special levy of assessment and assessments, from year to year, against all lands within the district to meet the payment and payments, including interest and sinking fund, obligated under any loan made hereunder; that such special assessments shall be increased not less than 15 per centum over and above the amount and amounts deemed to be required to meet the loan obligation, and if the sum realized from such special assessment and assessments be insufficient then any and all other income and property of the district shall be used as necessary to meet such obligation, except that no funds of the district shall be used to pay obligations hereunder where such funds have been made available to pay the outstanding bonds of such district, or interest thereon, or other obligations of the district shown of the public records of the county clerk of the county in which said district be situated, or if situated in more than one county, then the said records of each county.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2509; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-9.

### **73-13-10. [Execution and acknowledgment of security for loan.]**

Loans hereunder may be made and secured by notes, debentures, mortgages or pledges, or other form of obligation as shall by its board of directors be deemed for the best interest of such district and the board of directors of such district are hereby authorized and empowered to make, execute, acknowledge and deliver any and all such notes, bonds, mortgages, pledges, debentures or other form of obligation in the name of, and for and upon behalf of such district.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2510; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-10.

### **73-13-11. Limitation on term of loan; interest; renewal of loan.**

Loans made under the provisions hereof shall be for a period of not exceeding twenty (20) years, payable as to principal and interest as the board of directors may determine, but no obligation of the district issued hereunder shall be sold for less than

ninety cents (90¢) of the dollar par value thereof, and shall draw interest not to exceed seven (7) per centum per annum, provided that any such loan may be refunded or renewed, if necessary, for a further period of five (5) years.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2511; 1943, ch. 41, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-11.

### **73-13-12. [Advertisement or notice of sale unnecessary; private sale.]**

It shall not be necessary that any advertisement or notice of sale of any obligation issued hereunder be had or given, but any such loan may be made and evidence of debt sold, negotiated and delivered at private sale without advertisement or notice.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 77-2512; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-12.

### **73-13-13. [Total of loans not to exceed maximum.]**

No second or subsequent loan shall be made hereunder where the total thereof, including loan previously made hereunder, shall exceed the maximum amount per acre authorized hereunder.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 77-2513; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-13.

### **73-13-14. [Debt constitutes lien on district.]**

That obligations and evidence of debt issued by any district hereunder shall be a first lien on the income and property of such district, except outstanding bonds and lien obligations of [on] the records of the county clerk and recorder of the county or counties wherein said district be situated, as of prior date and recording of the loan or loans hereunder.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 77-2514; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-14.

### **73-13-15. [Use of borrowed money.]**

Money obtained or borrowed under the provisions hereof shall be expended only in the betterment, extension, construction, operation, reconstruction and repair of the canal, irrigation system and physical works of the district, and for the payment or retirement of any or all existing indebtedness not evidenced by outstanding bonds, and in any such expenditures made by the district the tender [lender] of the monies shall not be responsible for the application or expenditure thereof.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 8; 1941, ch. 112, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2515; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-15.

### **73-13-16. [Special assessment entered by county assessor; lien; collection.]**

Special assessments authorized and made hereunder shall be certified by the secretary of the board of directors of said district to the county assessor of the county or counties where the lands assessed are situated and said assessor shall immediately enter said special assessment on the tax rolls for the year specified in said special assessment whether such roll be in his hands or in the hands of the county treasurer and said special assessment when entered shall be and constitute a first lien upon the lands assessed until paid and shall be collected by the county treasurer at the same time and in the same manner with the same penalties and interest, when in default of payment, as are other levies and assessments of the district collected, or special assessments may be made and included with the regular levies and assessments made by the district for district purposes as now provided by law.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 9; 1941 Comp., § 77-2516; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-16.

### **73-13-17. [Purpose of act.]**

The intent of this act [73-13-8 to 73-13-18 NMSA 1978] is to authorize and allow irrigation district [districts] coming under the provisions hereof to borrow money and make loans from the reconstruction finance corporation, under the provisions of the Relief Act of the federal congress of 1932, and amendments made or to be made thereto, or from any like agency of the federal government or from any other agency, person, corporation or association, and it is declared that tolls, assessments or charge for the use of water and other facilities of any such district shall be deemed self-liquidating, within the intent and meaning of the said act of congress in reference thereto.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 10; 1941 Comp., § 77-2517; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-17.

### **73-13-18. [Construction of act.]**

Any and all laws relating to irrigation districts within the state of New Mexico which would or might be construed in conflict with this act [73-13-8 to 73-13-18 NMSA 1978] shall be held inoperative for the purposes and intent of this act, and this act shall be deemed to be additional to other laws and acts permitting or authorizing indebtedness by any district coming under the provisions hereof.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 52, § 11; 1941 Comp., § 77-2518; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-18.

### **73-13-19. [Delinquent tax sales; purchase by district.]**

Whenever any lands within and forming part of any irrigation district organized under or governed by Chapter 41 of the Session Laws of 1919, and Chapter 20 of the Session



Laws of 1919, have been heretofore or may be hereafter sold for delinquent taxes, such district may become the purchaser thereof or of the duplicate tax sale certificate therefor; provided, the rights and privileges by this act [73-13-19 to 73-13-23 NMSA 1978] conferred upon irrigation districts shall be cumulative, and this act shall not be construed to repeal Section 14 [73-11-35 NMSA 1978], Chapter 39 of the Sessions Laws of 1921.

**History:** Laws 1923, ch. 107, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-301; 1941 Comp., § 77-2520; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-19.

### **73-13-20. [Expiration of redemption period; tax deed to district; prior liens.]**

Whenever any such land so sold has been heretofore or shall be hereafter struck off to the county, and has not been redeemed, and the duplicate tax sale certificate therefor has not been sold or assigned by the county, it shall be the duty of the county treasurer, upon application by the board of directors of such district, at any time after the expiration of the period of redemption provided by law, to execute and deliver a tax deed conveying said land to said district subject to a prior lien for all the taxes, interest, penalty and costs due thereon; provided that where such land has been sold for delinquent taxes under the provisions of Chapter 133 of the Session Laws of 1921, the provisions of Section 453 of said Chapter 133 shall be complied with before such deed shall be issued.

**History:** Laws 1923, ch. 107, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 73-302; 1941 Comp., § 77-2521; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-20.

### **73-13-21. [Sale of land or water rights acquired through tax sale; discharge of lien; recording.]**

It shall be the duty of said board of directors to sell said land or any part thereof or any water rights appurtenant thereto as soon as practicable for not less than the amount of such lien and to pay to the county treasurer the amount of said lien together with accrued interest and costs, and thereupon said treasurer shall issue and deliver to the district a receipt therefor, which shall discharge said taxes and merge said lien in the district and its successor in title, which receipt shall be entitled to be recorded in the real estate records of the county without acknowledgment.

**History:** Laws 1923, ch. 107, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 73-303; 1941 Comp., § 77-2522; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-21.

### **73-13-22. [Authority to purchase; expenses of purchase.]**

The board of directors of any such district shall have full power and authority in the name and for the benefit of such district to make such purchases, to receive and hold

title to such lands and water rights, to prosecute suits to quiet title thereto and to sell and convey the same. The costs and expenses of any purchases and sales authorized by this act [73-13-19 to 73-13-23 NMSA 1978] and amounts required to pay the taxes assessed against such lands while title thereto is held by the district shall be deemed operating and current expense of such district and may be assessed as such.

**History:** Laws 1923, ch. 107, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 73-304; 1941 Comp., § 77-2523; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-22.

### **73-13-23. When county be reinvested with title.**

Provided, however, that if the amount of the lien to which the county treasurer's deed shall be made, as provided by Section 2 [73-13-20 NMSA 1978] hereof, be not fully paid within six years from the date of such deed, the county shall, at the expiration of such period, be and immediately become reinvested by operation of law, with the title conveyed thereby: and this amendment shall apply to tax deeds heretofore issued if three years have not expired after the date of said deeds and prior to the time this act shall go into effect.

**History:** Laws 1923, ch. 107, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 73-305; Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 8, § 13; 1941 Comp., § 77-2524; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-23.

### **73-13-24. [Assessment, levy and collection of taxes by district.]**

That whenever any board of directors of any irrigation district, organized under the laws of the state of New Mexico, shall decide by appropriate resolution that it is to the best interest of such district to assess, levy and collect the taxes of such district it may take over such duties.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-401; Laws 1933, ch. 121, § 1, 1941 Comp., § 77-2525; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-24.

### **73-13-25. [Definitions.]**

The word "district" as hereinafter used shall mean an irrigation district, organized under the laws of the state of New Mexico; the word "assessor-collector" as hereinafter used shall mean the assessor-collector of such irrigation district; the word "treasurer" as hereinafter used shall mean the treasurer of such irrigation district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 73-402; Laws 1933, ch. 121, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2526; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-25.

### **73-13-26. [Notice of intention to take over taxation duties.]**

In the event any board of directors of any such irrigation district shall, as provided in the first section [73-13-24 NMSA 1978] hereof, decide to take over the levying, assessment and collection of taxes of its district, it shall notify the boards of county commissioners of the counties in which such district lies of its intention, by serving on the chairman or chairmen thereof a copy of its resolution on or before the last day of February of the year for which it intends to take over such duties.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 73-403; 1941 Comp., § 77-2527; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-26.

### **73-13-27. [Meeting for determination of tax rate.]**

In the event of any such board of directors taking over such duties it shall become the duty of the board of directors, on or before the first day of September of each year, to determine the amount of money required to meet the obligations, maintenance, operating and current expenses for the ensuing year, and to fix the rate per acre of levy necessary to provide the amount of money required to pay the interest and principal of the bonds of said district as the same shall become due; also, to fix the rate per acre necessary to provide for the amount of money required for any other purposes under laws providing for the creating and operation of irrigation districts, and which are to be raised by the levy of taxes upon the lands of said district, and to certify the same to the assessor-collector of said district. The rate of levy necessary to raise the required amount of money for said district may be increased 15% to cover delinquencies.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 73-404; 1941 Comp., § 77-2528; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-27.

### **73-13-28. [Assessor-collector and treasurer; appointment; bond of assessor-collector; salary; deputies.]**

It shall become the duty of the board of directors of any such district after deciding to take over the duties of levying, assessing and collecting of the taxes of such district to appoint an assessor-collector and treasurer of such district; provided, that one person may be appointed to all of such offices. The person or persons appointed to such offices shall hold the same at the pleasure of the board.

The assessor-collector shall qualify by making and entering into a good and sufficient bond signed by a surety company, authorized to do business in this state, such bond to be subject to the approval of the board of directors and of the district judge of the district in which the office of the irrigation district is located, the amount thereof to be fixed by such board of directors, but such bond shall be in a sum not less than the sum of twenty thousand (\$20,000) dollars, conditioned for the faithful performance of his duties as assessor-collector, and for the paying over to the treasurer or to a legal depository all funds or sums of money and other things of value coming into his hands as such assessor-collector. The board of directors may require additional bond or additional security at any time the same be advisable in their judgment. Such assessor-

collector shall receive in full compensation for his service such salary as shall be fixed by the board of directors not exceeding the rate of fifteen hundred (\$1,500) dollars per annum.

One or more deputies may be appointed by the board of directors to assist the assessor-collector and treasurer, for such period of time as the board may direct, and when so appointed, such deputy shall perform such duties as the board of directors may order, and may be removed at any time, at the pleasure of the board of directors. Any such deputy shall give bond in such amount as the board of directors may require, which shall be conditioned as the bond of the assessor-collector is conditioned.

Such assessor-collector shall perform such other duties as the board of directors shall determine, and the board shall fix his additional compensation, if any, therefor.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 5; C.S. 1929, § 73-405; Laws 1933, ch. 23, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2529; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-28.

### **73-13-29. [Collections for United States; additional bond of treasurer.]**

In case any district is appointed fiscal agent of the United States, or is authorized by the United States to make collections of money for and in behalf of the United States, in connection with any federal reclamation project, such treasurer shall execute a further additional bond, in such sum as the secretary of the interior may require, conditioned for the faithful discharge by the district of its duties as fiscal or other agent of the United States, under such appointment or authorization; such additional bond to be approved, recorded and filed as provided for other official bonds, and any such additional bond may be sued on by the United States or any person injured by the failure of such officer or the district to perform the conditions of such bond.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 6; C.S. 1929, § 73-406; 1941 Comp., § 77-2530; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-29.

### **73-13-30. [Treasurer; bond; salary.]**

The treasurer after being appointed by the board of directors shall qualify by making an oath that he will well and truly perform his duties as such treasurer and by entering into a bond to the state of New Mexico conditioned the same as the bonds of county treasurers. Said bond to be in a sum to be fixed by the board of directors, but such bond shall be not less than the sum of twenty thousand (\$20,000) dollars, to be signed by a surety company, authorized to do business in this state, and to be approved by the board of directors and the district judge of the district in which the office of said irrigation district is located. Said treasurer shall receive a salary fixed by the board of directors not exceeding the rate of fifteen hundred (\$1,500) dollars per annum, and shall hold his office at the pleasure of the board or [of] directors; provided, however, that in the event one person is appointed to all the offices of assessor-collector and treasurer, only one

bond need be furnished in such sum as may be fixed by the board of directors, subject to the approval of the district judge of the district in which the office of the irrigation district is located.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 73-407; Laws 1933, ch. 23, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2531; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-30.

### **73-13-31. [Assessment roll.]**

The assessor-collector, on or before the first day of November of each year, shall prepare the assessment roll of the district, upon the blanks to be furnished by the board of directors, by entering upon said roll the name of the owner, the description and area of each tract of land in said district subject to taxation under the irrigation district laws of this state; a description of the tracts on the assessment rolls according to the plat numbers on the maps of the district, prepared by the United States bureau of reclamation, shall be a sufficient description; and shall extend upon said assessment roll the amounts due from each tract of land for each fund certified to him by the board of directors in a separate column and also the total taxes so levied for all the purposes of said irrigation district and the total amount due from each tract of land for all purposes in said irrigation district. In the event said district is composed of land lying in different counties, the assessor-collector shall make a separate assessment roll for each county. Said assessment roll shall be kept at the office of the district and the taxes shall be payable at the office of the district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 73-408; Laws 1933, ch. 14, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2532; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-31.

### **73-13-32. [Collection of taxes.]**

It shall be the duty of the assessor-collector of said irrigation district to collect and receipt for all taxes levied as herein provided in the same manner and at the same time as is required in the receipt for, and the collection of, taxes upon real estate for county purposes; provided, that such collector shall receive in payment of the district bond fund taxes above mentioned for the year in which said taxes were levied, interest coupons or bonds issued by said irrigation district maturing within said year, the same as so much lawful money of the United States, if such interest coupons do not exceed the amount of taxes for district bond fund which the person tendering the same owes. The assessor-collector shall on or before the first Monday of each month, turn over to the treasurer all monies and coupons theretofore collected or received by him or an account of such taxes.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 73-409; 1941 Comp., § 77-2533; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-32.

### **73-13-33. [Date for payment of taxes; delinquency; interest; penalties and costs; districts cooperating with reclamation laws.]**

All district taxes, tolls and charges of any irrigation district cooperating with the United States under the federal reclamation laws and other federal laws shall be due and payable as follows: first half January 1st of each year; second half July 1st of each year; on February 1 of each year, if the taxes, tolls and charges made the previous year shall not have been paid, one-half shall become delinquent; and on August 1st following, if not paid, the remaining one-half of said taxes, tolls and charges, shall become delinquent; and such taxes, tolls and charges from the respective dates of delinquency, shall bear interest at the rate of one-half of one percent per month until paid; provided, however, that when any such district shall have entered into a contract with the United States requiring the payment of the operation and maintenance costs to the United States in advance, all of such operation and maintenance taxes, tolls and charges, and all taxes, tolls and charges for current and miscellaneous expenses, shall be due and payable on the first day of January of each year, and on February 1st of each year, if the operation and maintenance taxes, tolls and charges, and taxes, tolls and charges for current miscellaneous expenses made the previous year shall not have been paid, all of the same shall become delinquent and shall bear interest at the rate of one-half of one percent per month until paid; and provided further, that the laws as to penalties and costs for delinquent taxes due to the county shall apply to delinquent taxes due to the district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 73-410; Laws 1939, ch. 217, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2534; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-33.

### **73-13-34. [Powers of district treasurer; delinquent taxes.]**

That whenever any such irrigation district shall take over the levy, assessment and collection of the taxes of such district, the treasurer of such district shall have all the powers and be charged with all the duties, with reference to the collection of delinquent taxes of such district as are imposed by law on the county treasurer, with reference to the collection of state and county taxes, and that the provision by law regarding the collection of delinquent state and county taxes by suit, judgment, issuance and sale of tax sale certificates and tax deeds, or otherwise, shall be applicable to collection of delinquent taxes of such district; provided, however, that any tax sale certificate or tax deed, issued by the treasurer of such district shall be issued, subject to state, county and municipal taxes.

**History:** Laws 1929, ch. 88, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 73-411; Laws 1933, ch. 121, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2535; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-34.

### **73-13-35. [Accounts kept by treasurer; payments; monthly report; depositories.]**

It shall be the duty of the treasurer to keep a district bond fund account, a district contract fund account, a district operation and maintenance fund account and a district general fund account, and the proceeds of the taxes collected shall be covered into the respective funds. The district bond fund shall consist of all moneys collected for

principal and interest of the bonds issued by said district; the district contract fund shall consist of all moneys received from taxes levied to provide for payment to the United States; the operation and maintenance fund shall consist of all moneys received on account of the operation and maintenance of irrigation and drainage system, except moneys to be paid to the United States pursuant to any contract; and the federal [general] fund shall consist of all moneys received on account of current and miscellaneous expenses, not to be covered into any of the foregoing funds. Provided, however, that the treasurer and other officers of irrigation districts, other than those organized to cooperate with the government of the United States under federal reclamation law, shall not be required to keep a contract fund account.

The treasurer shall pay out of the district bond fund when due, the interest and principal of said bonds of said district, at the time and place specified in said bonds. The treasurer shall pay out of the said contract fund, all payments as they become due to the United States under contract at the time and in the manner provided in said contract. The treasurer shall pay out of said operation and maintenance fund, only upon warrants signed by the president or vice president, and countersigned by the secretary of the district directed to such party or parties as are due payment for operating and maintaining said irrigation and drainage system. The treasurer shall pay out of said general fund only upon order signed by the president or vice president, and countersigned by the secretary of said district.

The treasurer, on the fifteenth day of each month, shall report to the board of directors of said district, the amount of money in his hands to the credit of the respective funds above provided. All district taxes collected and paid to the treasurer, as aforesaid, shall be by him deposited in a bank or banks to be designated by the board of directors as a depository, and the board of directors is hereby created a board of finance, and the funds of said district shall be deposited in accordance with the law in force in respect to public depositories.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 12; C.S. 1929, § 73-412; Laws 1933, ch. 121, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2536; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-35.

### **73-13-36. [County treasurer to turn over funds to district treasurer upon appointment.]**

Immediately upon the appointment and qualification of the treasurer, the county treasurer and ex-officio district treasurer shall turn over to the treasurer all funds of the district and take proper receipts therefor.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 13; C.S. 1929, § 73-413; 1941 Comp., § 77-2537; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-36.

### **73-13-37. [Criminal liability of assessor-collector and treasurer.]**

The assessor-collector and treasurer of such district shall be liable for indictment and criminal prosecution for malfeasance, misfeasance or failure to perform any duty herein prescribed, as provided by law in cases of county treasurers.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 129, § 14; C.S. 1929, § 73-414; 1941 Comp., § 77-2538; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-37.

### **73-13-38. [Insolvency of municipal irrigation districts; appointment of receiver.]**

That whenever any municipal irrigation district shall become insolvent and unable to pay its debts, the district court may, at the suit of its board of directors, appoint a receiver for such municipal irrigation district, to operate the same under the court's directions, for the purpose of conducting the affairs of such irrigation district.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 55, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2539; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-38.

### **73-13-39. [Powers of receiver of municipal district.]**

Whenever any receiver is appointed, as provided in the preceding section [73-13-38 NMSA 1978], he shall enter into such bond as the court may fix, and he shall have the same powers and authority heretofore exercised by the board of directors of such irrigation district, and such additional powers as a court of equity may or can grant.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 55, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2540; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-39.

### **73-13-40. [Powers of receivers of irrigation districts; limitation on power.]**

That whenever any irrigation district has been placed in the hands of a receiver by order of court, such receiver shall be vested with all powers and authority which, in the absence of such receivership, would be vested in the board of directors of such district; provided, however, that in all cases where, in the absence of such receivership, a formal resolution of the board of directors of such district would be necessary for the exercise of some power or authority or the accomplishment of some purpose, such receiver shall only exercise such power or authority or accomplish such purpose when authorized so to do by order of the court in which such receivership proceedings are pending.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 180, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2541; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-40.

### **73-13-41. [Powers upon order of court; effect of action.]**

That upon order of the court in which any such receivership is pending, the receiver of any irrigation district may execute, on behalf of such district, any contract,



conveyance, bond, debenture or other instrument which the board of directors of such district might or could have executed in its behalf in the absence of such receivership and may take any other action in connection with the affairs of such district which such board of directors might or could take in the absence of such receivership, and that any and all such action so taken or instruments so executed by such receiver shall, in all respects, have the same force and effect and be binding upon such district in the same manner and to the same extent as if such action had been taken or said instruments had been executed by or under the authority of the board of directors or other appropriate officer or officers of such district in the absence of such receivership.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 180, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2542; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-41.

### **73-13-42. [Additional powers.]**

That in addition to the power and authority specified in Paragraphs [Sections] one and two hereof [73-13-40, 73-13-41 NMSA 1978], all such receivers shall have further powers and authority as the court in which such proceedings are pending may or can grant.

**History:** Laws 1933, ch. 180, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2543; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-42.

### **73-13-43. [Validating law; definitions.]**

The following terms, whenever used or referred to in this act [73-13-43 to 73-13-46 NMSA 1978], shall have the following meaning unless a different meaning clearly appears from the context:

A. the term "irrigation law" shall mean Chapter 20 of the Session Laws of 1919, Chapter 41 of the Session Laws of 1919 and Chapter 76 of the Sessions Laws of 1929, and acts amendatory thereof, and Chapter 73 of the 1929 Compiled Statutes Annotated of New Mexico, as amended;

B. the term "irrigation district" shall mean and include every irrigation district created, established or organized, or purporting to have been created, established or organized under the provisions of the irrigation law;

C. the term "directors" shall mean and include every board of directors or other governing body of any irrigation district, created, established or organized, or purporting to have been created, established or organized under the provisions of the irrigation law.

**History:** Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 9, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2544; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-43.

### **73-13-44. [Establishment and proceedings of districts validated.]**

That the creation, establishment and organization of irrigation districts, or purported creation, purported establishment and purported organization under the provisions of the irrigation law, together with all notices, proceedings, acts and deeds done and performed with reference thereto, be and the same are hereby validated, ratified, confirmed, approved and declared legal in all respects, and that the aforesaid irrigation districts are hereby created, established and organized and continued bodies corporate and politic, and shall include and be comprised, as if the metes and bounds thereof were set forth herein, of the lands originally included in each irrigation district as defined and established by the board of county commissioners of the proper county under the provisions of the irrigation law, and any other lands included or purporting to have been included in such district, by the directors thereof by proceedings as provided by the irrigation law, excepting only such lands as may have been excluded or purporting to have been excluded from such district, by the directors thereof by proceedings as provided by the irrigation law; provided, that nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to hereafter prevent any lands from being excluded from or included in such district by the directors in accordance with the procedure now or hereafter provided by the irrigation law; and any and all proceedings heretofore had by the board of directors of any such irrigation district intended for the purpose of excluding from or including within such district or districts, any lands, are hereby validated, ratified, confirmed, approved and declared legal in all respects.

**History:** Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 9, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2545; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-44.

### **73-13-45. [Elections and appointments of officers and employees validated.]**

That all elections of directors of said irrigation districts held or purporting to be held under the provisions of the irrigation law and all appointments of officers, employees and agents of irrigation districts made or purported to have been made by the directors of such irrigation district, be, and the same hereby are validated, ratified, confirmed, approved and declared legal in all respects, and the said directors, officers, employees and agents are hereby declared to be the duly qualified directors, officers, employees and agents of the said irrigation districts with the rights, powers and duties granted unto them by the laws of this state or conferred upon them by the directors of such district, with like effect as though at the time or times said acts and proceedings, elections and appointments were done or had, there existed de jure irrigation districts and statutory authority for the doing thereof.

**History:** Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 9, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2546; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-45.

### **73-13-46. [Unissued bonds; elections validated.]**

That all elections in said irrigation districts authorizing or purporting to authorize the issuance of bonds of said irrigation districts which have not been delivered and paid for

prior to the date this act [73-13-43 to 73-13-46 NMSA 1978] shall become effective, be, and the same hereby are validated, ratified, confirmed, approved and declared legal and still effective in all respects. Upon resolution adopted by a majority of the members of the board of directors of such irrigation districts, all such authorized and unissued bonds may be issued, sold, executed and delivered by the directors notwithstanding any discrepancies or irregularities which may have occurred in the proceedings relating to the holding of such elections or in the length of time, not exceeding twenty years, which may have occurred from the date of the holding of such elections or purported elections to the date of the passage of such resolution, any laws of this state to the contrary notwithstanding.

**History:** Laws 1934 (S.S.), ch. 9, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2547; 1953 Comp., § 75-26-46.

### **73-13-47. Irrigation districts; regulations; recreational use of reservoirs.**

Whenever an irrigation district impounds waters on lands leased from or with consent of a state or federal agency, the irrigation district may adopt regulations in conformance with the existing state laws that provide for public safety, environmental protection and restricted use provisions relating to the use of the surface waters for recreational purposes.

**History:** Laws 1987, ch. 325, § 1.

## **ARTICLE 14**

### **Conservancy Districts; Definitions; Organization and Management**

#### **73-14-1. Declaration.**

The establishment of conservancy districts for the purposes and in the manner provided for in this act is hereby declared to be conducive to the public health, safety, convenience and welfare.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 101; C.S. 1929, § 30-101; 1941 Comp., § 77-2701; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-1.

#### **73-14-2. Application.**

This act shall be construed as applying to districts organized for the purpose of providing and maintaining flood protection, river control, drainage, water storage for supplementing irrigation needs, constructing and maintaining distribution systems for irrigation; and other improvements for public health, safety, convenience and welfare

either in cooperation with the United States government or any department thereof under federal laws, or to districts organized for the purpose of making such improvements under the powers in this act contained; but the provisions hereof shall not apply to or affect irrigation or drainage districts heretofore organized under any other laws of this state.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 102; C.S. 1929, § 30-102; 1941 Comp., § 77-2702; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-2.

### **73-14-3. Definition of terms.**

A. This act may be known and cited as "The Conservancy Act of New Mexico"; the districts created hereunder may be termed "conservancy districts"; and the bonds which may be issued hereunder may be called "conservancy bonds," and such designation may be engraved or printed on their face; the tax books and records provided hereunder shall be termed "conservancy books" or "conservancy records," and such title shall be printed, stamped or written thereon.

B. Whenever the term "person" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean a person, firm, copartnership, association or corporation, other than a county, town, city or other political subdivision. Similarly, the words "public corporation" shall be taken to mean counties; towns; villages; cities; community land grants; community ditches or acequias; water users' associations; school, drainage, irrigation, water, park improvement or conservancy districts; and all governmental agencies clothed with the power of levying or providing for the levy of general or special taxes, or special assessments.

C. Whenever the term "land" or "real property" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean real estate, as the words "real estate" are defined by the laws of the state of New Mexico, and shall embrace all railroads, electric railroads, street and interurban railroads, highways, roads, streets and street improvements, electric, telephone, telegraph and transmission lines, gas, electric, sewer and water systems, water rights, irrigation, drainage and community ditches or acequias; pipelines and rights-of-way of public or private corporations and all other real property whether held for public or private use.

D. Whenever the term "land" or "property" is used with reference to benefits, appraisals, assessments or taxes; public corporations shall, as political entities, be considered as included in such reference, in the same manner as "land" or "property."

E. Whenever the term "tax" or "taxes" is used, and not otherwise specified, with reference to levies for benefits, damages, construction, improvements or maintenance, it shall be taken to mean special taxes or special assessments.

F. Whenever the term "publication" is used and no manner specified therefor, it shall be taken to mean publication, in both English and Spanish, once a week for three

(3) consecutive weeks in at least one newspaper of general circulation in each county wherein such publication is to be made. It shall not be necessary that publication shall be made on the same days of the week in each of the three (3) weeks, but not less than fourteen (14) days (excluding the day of the first publication) shall intervene between the first publication and the last publication; and publication shall be complete on the date of the last publication.

G. In case of a conservancy district or proposed conservancy district lying in one judicial district, whenever the term "court" or "conservancy court" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean the district court of that judicial district of the state of New Mexico wherein the petition for the organization of a conservancy district shall be filed, or a judge thereof in vacation. In case of a conservancy district, or proposed conservancy district lying in more than one judicial district then for the purposes of this act, the words "court" or "conservancy court" shall have the same significance.

H. Whenever the term "clerk" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean the clerk of the county of the state of New Mexico wherein the petition for the organization of a conservancy district shall be filed.

I. Whenever the term "district" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean a conservancy district organized or ratified and continued under the provisions of this act, and to include only the lands described in the order of the court establishing said district and such additional lands therein, if any, on record in the office of the clerk, and property and rights acquired by the district.

J. Whenever the term "board" or "directors" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean the board of directors appointed by the court for a conservancy district organized under the provisions of this act.

K. Whenever the term "president" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean the chairman of the board of directors and the president of a conservancy district organized under the provisions of this act.

L. Whenever the term "secretary" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean the secretary of the board of directors of a conservancy district organized under the provisions of this act.

M. Whenever the term "treasurer" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean the treasurer of [a] conservancy district organized under the provisions of this act.

N. Whenever the term "appraisers" is used, and not otherwise specified, it shall be taken to mean the board of appraisers appointed by the court for a conservancy district organized under the provisions of this act.

O. Whenever the term "public health" is used in this act it shall be construed to include any act or thing tending to improve the general sanitary condition of the community, whether by way of drainage, relieving low or wet land of stagnant and unhealthy conditions or preventing the flooding of any lands producing or tending to produce unhealthful conditions.

P. Whenever the terms "public welfare" or "public benefit" are used, they shall be construed to extend to and include any act or thing tending to improve or benefit the general public or benefit the inhabitants of the district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 103; C.S. 1929, § 30-103; Laws 1933, ch. 80, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2703; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-3.

### **73-14-4. Jurisdiction of the conservancy court.**

A. The conservancy court is hereby vested with jurisdiction, power and authority, when the conditions stated in Section 202 [73-14-5 NMSA 1978] are found to exist, to establish conservancy districts for all or any of the following purposes:

- (1) preventing floods;
- (2) regulating stream channels by changing, widening or deepening the same;
- (3) regulating the flow of streams;
- (4) diverting, controlling or in whole or in part eliminating watercourses;
- (5) reclaiming, draining or filling wet and overflowed lands;
- (6) of providing for irrigation where it may be needed and otherwise benefiting and developing agricultural lands or lands susceptible of irrigation or agricultural development;
- (7) protecting public and private property from inundation.

Incident to the foregoing purposes and to enable their accomplishment, any district so established shall have the power to straighten, widen, deepen, divert or change the course or terminus of any natural or artificial watercourse; drainage, irrigation or community ditches, or acequias; to build reservoirs, canals, drainage, irrigation or community ditches or acequias, levees, walls, embankments, bridges or dams; to drain, reclaim or fill low lands and lands subject to overflow; to make improvements, to remove and to regulate and prescribe the location of improvements upon land; to maintain, operate and repair any of the construction herein named; to sink wells, to purchase, develop and reclaim waters for the purpose of using, distributing, selling or leasing the same; to construct, operate, lease and control plants for the generation, distribution, sale, lease and use of electric energy; to construct, maintain and operate irrigation and

drainage works or systems, necessary to maintain the irrigability of lands within the district, or to purchase, extend, improve, operate and maintain constructed works; to cooperate and contract with the federal or any state government or agent or department thereof; to promote the agricultural resources and marketing facilities of the district; to levy assessments, issue bonds and make appropriations of money, and to do all things necessary to effectuate and fulfill the purposes of this act; and such powers shall also be appraised as herein provided.

B. The conservancy court shall thereafter, for all purposes of this act, except as heretofore or hereinafter otherwise provided, maintain and have original and exclusive jurisdiction coextensive with the boundaries of said district, and of lands and other property proposed to be included in said district or affected by said district, without regard to the usual limits of its jurisdiction.

C. No judge of such court wherein such petition is filed or other judge exercising administrative or judicial functions under the provisions of this act shall be disqualified to perform any duty imposed by this act by reason of ownership of property within any district or proposed district, or by reason of ownership of any property that may be benefited, taxed or assessed therein.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 201; C.S. 1929, § 30-201; 1941 Comp., § 77-2704; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-4.

### **73-14-5. Petition; place of filing; signatures; contents; land included.**

A. Before any district shall be established under this act, a petition shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the court vested with jurisdiction, in a county in which all or a part of the lands embraced in said proposed district are situated, signed by the owners of more than one-third of the real property in such proposed district, in either acreage or value, as shown by the last preceding assessment roll of the county or counties wherein such district is proposed to be created.

B. Whenever a proposed district shall include territory extending into more than one judicial district, the petition for the organization of said district shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the court in and for that county which has the greatest valuation of real property within the proposed district, as shown by the tax rolls of the respective counties.

C. Such a petition may also be signed by any private corporations owning lands within the proposed district, or by the governing body of any public corporation lying wholly or partly within the proposed district, in such manner as it may prescribe, and when so signed, such petition shall fill all the requirements of representation upon such petition of the owners of land of such public corporation, as they appear upon the tax rolls; and thereafter it shall not be necessary for individuals within said public corporation to sign such a petition.

D. Any city interested in some degree in the improvement, upon proper action by its governing body, may alone file the petition required by this section.

E. The petition shall set forth:

- (1) the proposed name of said district;
- (2) that property within the proposed district will be benefited by the accomplishment of one or more of the purposes enumerated in Section 73-14-4 NMSA 1978;
- (3) a general description of the purpose of the contemplated improvement, and of the territory to be included in the proposed district; such description need not be given by metes and bounds or by legal subdivisions, but it shall be sufficient to enable a property owner to ascertain whether his property is within the territory proposed to be organized as a district; said territory need not be contiguous, provided it be so situated that the organization as a single district of the territory described is calculated to promote one or more of the purposes enumerated in Section 73-14-4 NMSA 1978;
- (4) said petition shall pray for the organization of the district by the name proposed.

F. No petition with the requisite signatures shall be declared null and void on account of alleged defects, but the court may at any time permit the petition to be amended to conform to the facts, by correcting any errors in the description of the territory or in any other particular.

G. Several similar petitions or duplicate copies of the same petition for the organization of the same district may be filed and shall together be regarded as one petition. All such petitions filed, prior to the hearing on the first petition filed, shall be considered by the court the same as though filed with the first petition.

H. A guardian, conservator or personal representative of an estate who is appointed as such under the laws of this state, and who as such guardian, conservator or personal representative is entitled to the possession of the lands belonging to the estate which he represents, may, on behalf of his ward or the estate which he represents, upon being thereunto authorized by the proper court, sign and acknowledge the petition in this act mentioned and may act in respect to the said lands to the same extent and in the same manner as a private owner might act.

I. For the inclusion in any existing district of territory beyond its boundaries, the same procedure as specified for the organization of a district may be followed by the landowners of the said territory; provided, however, approval and consent thereto by the court shall first have been obtained. Such territory may also be included by the appraisers of such existing district as hereinafter provided. In the event that all of the landowners of such territory desire to have the same included in such district, a petition



signed by each of them shall be filed in the court which has jurisdiction over such district, and upon approval and consent thereto by the court, no further proceedings except the order of the court including such territory in such district shall be necessary. Provided, however, the directors of the district may be heard before the court on any objections the district may have to the inclusion of such territory therein because of the change in official plan and the appraisal of the benefits and damages.

J. In determining whether a requisite number of landowners have signed the petition, the court shall be governed by the names as they appear upon the tax roll, which shall be prima facie evidence of such ownership.

K. No land shall be included or proposed to be included in any such district which is so situated that it cannot reasonably be drained, flooded or irrigated as an integral part thereof by or from any stream or waters to be controlled thereby, and is more than two miles distant from any lands above described.

L. No district formed under the provisions of Chapter 140, Laws of New Mexico, 1923, or formed under the provisions of this act, for the protection and conservation of property in the Rio Grande valley, shall include any lands south of the Elephant Butte dam; provided that any district formed under said Chapter 140, Laws of New Mexico, 1923, shall retain all rights to impound and control the water of the Rio Grande or other streams or waters, or to acquire rights and property incident thereto that it now possesses, whether within or without the district as hereby limited and defined. Except as otherwise provided herein, the boundaries of any such district heretofore created shall be limited and confined to the territory as herein defined.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 202; C.S. 1929, § 30-202; 1941 Comp., § 77-2705; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-5; Laws 1971, ch. 51, § 1; 1975, ch. 257, § 8-132.

### **73-14-6. Bond of petitioners.**

At the time of filing the petition, or at any time subsequent thereto and prior to the time of the hearing on said petition, a bond shall be filed, with security approved by the court, sufficient to pay all the expneses [expenses] connected with the proceedings in case the organization of the district be not effected. If at any time during the proceeding the court shall be satisfied that the bond first executed is not sufficient it may require the execution of an additional bond within a time to be fixed, which shall not be less than ten days from the date of such order, and upon failure of the petitioners to execute the same, the petition shall be dismissed.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 203; C.S. 1929, § 30-203; 1941 Comp., § 77-2706; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-6.

### **73-14-7. Notice of hearing on petition.**

A. Immediately after the filing [filing] of such petition the court shall by order fix a place and time, not less than ninety (90) days after the petition is filed, for hearing thereon, and thereupon the clerk shall cause notice by publication (Schedule Form I) [73-17-24 NMSA 1978] to be made of the pendency of the petition and of the time and place of the hearing thereon, in each county in which there is territory included in the proposed district. If no newspaper is published in any such county, publication shall be made in a newspaper of general circulation in the proposed district.

B. It shall not be necessary for said clerk to name the parties interested, nor to describe separate lots or tracts of land in giving said notice, but it shall be sufficient to give such descriptions as will enable the owner to determine whether or not his land is covered by such description.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 204; C.S. 1929, § 30-204; 1941 Comp., § 77-2707; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-7.

### **73-14-8. Protesting petitions and hearing on petitions.**

Any owner of real property or any public corporation in said proposed district not having individually signed a petition for the organization and incorporation of said district may, on or before the date set for the cause to be heard, file objections to the organization and incorporation of such district. Such objections shall be heard by the court as an advanced case without unnecessary delay.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 205; C.S. 1929, § 30-205; 1941 Comp., § 77-2708; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-8.

### **73-14-9. Hearing.**

A. Upon the hearing of the petition as provided for in Section 73-14-8 NMSA 1978, if it appears that a petition for the organization of the district has been signed and presented as required by law, and that the allegations of the petition are true, that the lands described in the petition substantially conform to the requirements of Subsection K, Section 73-14-5 NMSA 1978, and that no protesting petition has been filed, or if filed has been dismissed, the court shall give the district a corporate name, by which in all proceedings it shall thereafter be known, and shall fix a date for an election and order the board of county commissioners of any county within which the proposed district lies, to conduct such election on the question of whether or not the district shall be created.

B. If the court finds against the prayer of the petitions [petition], it shall dismiss the proceedings and adjudge the costs against the signers of the petition in the proportions as it deems just and equitable.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 206; C.S. 1929, § 30-206; 1941 Comp. § 77-2709; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-8.1, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 76, § 1.

### **73-14-10. Notice of election; publication.**

Upon entry of the order of the court, the board of county commissioners of any county within which the proposed district lies, shall cause to be published a notice of the election in a newspaper of general circulation in the proposed conservancy district, at least once a week for three consecutive weeks.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-8.2, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 76, § 2.

### **73-14-11. Form of ballot.**

The form of the ballots for the creation of the conservancy district shall be printed and appear in substantially the following form:

"BALLOT

On the question of the formation of \_\_\_\_\_ Conservancy District.

(Place "X" in one of the boxes below)

For the creation of the conservancy district [ ]

Against the creation of the conservancy district [ ]."

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-8.3, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 76, § 3.

### **73-14-12. Conduct of election.**

A. The election on the issue of whether the proposed conservancy district will be created shall be conducted and canvassed in the same manner in the territory of the proposed district as elections for municipal school board members are carried out. Only persons who are qualified electors and landowners of the district shall be eligible to vote in the election.

B. The cost of conducting the election within each county in which the district is proposed shall be borne by that county.

C. Election officials shall count the votes cast and as soon as all the ballots have been counted, they shall certify the total number of votes cast and the number cast for the creation of the district and the number cast against the creation of the district within the territory of the proposed district.

D. The results of the election after being canvassed shall be certified to the court by the board of county commissioners.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-8.4, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 76, § 4.

### **73-14-13. Declaration of organization.**

A. The court, upon receipt of the certified results of the election that a majority of the persons voting have voted in favor of creating the district, shall declare the district organized.

B. Thereupon, the district shall be a political subdivision of the state and a body corporate with all the powers of a public or municipal corporation. The district shall have power to sue and be sued, to incur debts, liabilities and obligations, to exercise the right of eminent domain and of taxation and assessment as provided in the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, to issue negotiable bonds, and to perform all acts necessary and proper for carrying out the purposes for which the district was created and for exercising the powers with which it is invested.

C. In its declaration, the court shall designate where the office or principal place of business of the district shall be located, which shall be within the corporate limits of the district, if practicable, and which may be changed by order of the court. The regular meetings of the board of directors shall be held at such office or place of business, but for cause may be adjourned to any other convenient place. The official records and files of the district shall be kept at the office so established.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-9, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 76, § 5.

### **73-14-14. Application of election law.**

Sections 73-14-9 through 73-14-13 NMSA 1978 shall not be construed as applying to any conservancy district organized for the purpose of providing and maintaining for surface waters: flood protection, river control, drainage, water storage for supplementing irrigation needs, constructing and maintaining distribution systems for irrigation and other improvements for public health and safety.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-9.1, enacted by Laws 1971, ch. 201, § 1.

### **73-14-15. Hearing; declaration of organization; nature of district; contents of decree.**

A. In respect to conservancy districts involving surface waters, upon the hearing of the petitions as provided in Section 73-14-8 NMSA 1978, if it shall appear that a petition for the organization of a district has been signed and presented, as hereinbefore provided, and that the allegations of the petition are true, that the lands described in the petition substantially conform to the requirements of Subsection K of Section 73-14-5 NMSA 1978, and that no protesting petition has been filed, or if filed has been dismissed, the court shall, by order, adjudicate all questions of jurisdiction, declare the district organized and give it a corporate name by which in all proceedings it shall thereafter be known.

B. Thereupon the district shall be a political subdivision of the state of New Mexico and a body corporate with all the powers of a public or municipal corporation; shall have power to sue and be sued, to incur debts, liabilities and obligations, to exercise the right of eminent domain and of taxation and assessment as herein provided, to issue negotiable bonds and to do and perform all acts herein expressly authorized, and all acts necessary and proper for carrying out the purposes for which the district was created and for exercising the powers with which it is vested.

C. In such decree, the court shall designate the place where the office or principal place of business of the district shall be located, which shall be within the corporate limits of the district, if practicable, and which may be changed by order of the court from time to time. The regular meetings of the board of directors shall be held at such office or place of business, but for cause may be adjourned to any other convenient place. The official records and files of the district shall be kept at the office so established.

D. If the court finds against the prayer of petition, it shall dismiss said proceedings and adjudge the costs against the signers of the petition in such proportions as it shall deem just and equitable.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-9.2, enacted by Laws 1971, ch. 201, § 2.

### **73-14-16. Filing order of incorporation.**

Within thirty days after the district has been declared a corporation by the court, the clerk shall transmit to the secretary of state and to the probate clerk and ex-officio recorder in each of the counties having lands in the district, copies of the findings and the order of the court incorporating the district. The copies of the findings shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state in the same manner as articles of incorporation are now required to be filed under the general laws concerning corporations. Copies shall also be filed in the office of the probate clerk and ex-officio recorder of each county in which a part of the district may be, where they shall become permanent records. The recorder in each county shall receive a fee of one dollar (\$1.00) for filing and preserving them, and the secretary of state shall receive a fee of five dollars (\$5.00) for filing and preserving them.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 207; C.S. 1929, § 30-207; 1941 Comp., § 77-2710; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-10; 2013, ch. 75, § 47.

### **73-14-17. Appointment of directors.**

A. Within thirty (30) days after entering the decree incorporating said district or, in cases of conservancy districts heretofore created under the laws of the state of New Mexico, within thirty (30) days after the passage and approval of this act (§§ 77-2701 - 77-2928, 77-3001 - 77-3024) the conservancy court shall appoint as a board of directors of the district, five (5) persons. Directors must be residents of and owners of property in the district, provided, however, in districts embracing lands situate in four or more

counties the number of directors appointed shall be seven (7) and, at least one (1) director shall be a resident of and appointed from each county therein, and no more than two (2) directors so appointed shall be residents of the same county and provided further that, in districts embracing lands situate in four (4) or more counties at least one (1) director shall be appointed from each county having land within such district and each director so appointed shall be a person who is a resident of and owner of land within the district who derives not less than 75% of his income from irrigation farming. Said directors shall be appointed for terms of six (6) years. The court shall fill all vacancies which may occur on said board. Each director shall hold office during the term for which he is appointed and until his successor is duly appointed and has qualified, being removable therefrom only for cause after a hearing upon a motion filed by any interested person in the original proceeding in which the district was organized, and shall furnish a corporate surety bond at the expense of the district in amount and form fixed and approved by the court, conditioned upon the faithful performance of his duties as such director, which shall be filed in the office of the clerk.

B. All of the provisions of this act (Secs. 77-2701 - 77-2928, 77-3001 - 77-3024), and of proceedings thereunder and relating to the qualifications, powers and duties of "director" and "boards [board] of directors" shall apply to the "commissioners" and "board of commissioners" provided for in this section; and whenever the term "director" or "board of directors" is used in this act (Secs. 77-2701 - 77-2928, 77-3001 - 77-3024) with reference to their organization, powers and duties, it shall be taken and construed to mean and include the "commissioners" and "board of commissioners" created by this section. Vacancies on the board by expiration of term or otherwise shall be filled in the same manner as original appointment. The office of director and the board of directors created under Chapter 140 of the Laws of 1923, so far as it relates to any conservancy district organized thereunder for the protection and conservation of lands in the Rio Grande valley, extending into two (2) or more judicial districts is hereby terminated and abolished.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 301; C.S. 1929, § 30-301; Laws 1933, ch. 80, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2711; Laws 1953, ch. 183, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.

### **73-14-18. Abolition of boards of directors of districts having more than one hundred thousand acres and created prior to 1930.**

As the same are now constituted, any conservancy district organized under the provisions of the Conservancy Act of New Mexico and such conservancy district being created prior to 1930, embracing land situate in four or more counties and having an appointed board of directors, shall, after the election and qualification of the board of directors cease to have an appointed board of directors and in lieu thereof shall have an elected board of directors as provided in Sections 73-14-18 through 73-14-32 NMSA 1978, which board of directors shall bear the name "Board of Directors of the ..... Conservancy District" and shall be a body corporate, may sue and be sued, and which shall succeed to, have, exercise, enjoy, assume and perform all of the rights, powers,

obligations and duties now by law vested in, conferred upon, imposed upon or required of, the boards hereby abolished.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.1, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 1.

### **73-14-19. Boards of directors; membership; qualifications.**

The boards of directors created by Sections 73-14-18 through 73-14-32 NMSA 1978 shall consist of three directors from and representing that portion of the most populous county within the conservancy district, one director each from and representing those portions of each of the remaining counties within the conservancy district and one director from and representing the district at large; provided that each director:

A. is a qualified elector of the conservancy district; and

B. resides within the conservancy district and the county from which he is elected or, if representing the district at large, resides within one of the four counties of the conservancy district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.2, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 2; 1996, ch. 42, § 5.

### **73-14-20. Definitions.**

As used in Sections 73-14-18 through 73-14-30 NMSA 1978:

A. "benefited area" means that area described by a property appraisal that receives a benefit as a result of the creation of a district for any of the purposes specified in Section 73-14-4 NMSA 1978;

B. "election director" means the person whom the board of directors may request to provide election services by a contract;

C. "election officer" means a person appointed by the board of directors to conduct the election in the absence of the election director to perform the election director's duties as required pursuant to law;

D. "list compiler" means a contractor approved by the board of directors to compile and produce a qualified elector list for a conservancy district;

E. "qualified elector" means an individual who owns real property within the benefited area of the conservancy district and who has provided proof of an ownership interest to one of the sources specified in Subsection B of Section 73-14-20.1 NMSA 1978 within the required time period, or who resides on and owns legal or equitable title in tribal lands and who is over the age of majority;

F. "qualified elector's list" means the list compiled before each election that contains the individual names of all qualified electors; and

G. "residence" means a dwelling that lies partially or completely within the benefited area.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.3, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 3; 1996, ch. 42, § 6; 1999, ch. 168, § 1; 2018, ch. 79, § 139; 2025, ch. 21, § 2.

### **73-14-20.1. Qualified elector list.**

A. The board of directors of the conservancy district may contract for a list compiler before each election to compile and produce a qualified elector's list for the district. The list compiler shall deliver the completed list to the election director or election officer no later than forty-five days prior to a district election. An individual who purchases property ninety days prior to an election and whose name does not appear on the qualified elector's list shall not vote in that election. The individual may become certified to vote in a future election by filing a deed of title with the appropriate county clerk at least ninety days before the next conservancy district election.

B. Names of qualified electors shall be obtained from the records of the county clerk of the appropriate county, the appropriate county assessor of the appropriate county, records of the conservancy district or from the census bureau and enrollment records provided by the pueblos. The county assessor of the appropriate county, the county clerk of the appropriate county and the tribal representatives of the appropriate pueblos shall deliver to the list compiler all records regarding qualified electors of the benefited area no later than the last day of each July before a district election.

C. Updating the qualified elector's list shall consist of adding, for any new qualified elector who has purchased property in the district, the name, address and description of all property owned by the qualified elector in the benefited area and removing the name of any elector who is deceased or who no longer owns property within the benefited area.

D. Proof of ownership of land within the benefited area requires one of the following:

(1) a recorded deed or real estate contract indicating current ownership of land within the benefited area;

(2) an individual's name on county clerk records indicating a description of property the individual owns within the benefited area;

(3) an individual's name on a list compiled by the governing body of a pueblo within the benefited area indicating that the individual named is residing on and has legal or equitable title in the pueblo; or



(4) a current property tax bill indicating ownership of land within the benefited area.

E. The election director or election officer shall distribute to each polling place a current qualified elector's list for the appropriate county. The election director or election officer shall distribute the qualified elector's list to each polling place within a pueblo located within the benefited area. A qualified elector may vote at any one polling place in the pueblo or county where the elector owns land. An individual who seeks to cast a vote but whose name is not on the qualified elector's list shall not be allowed to vote in that election.

**History:** 1978 Comp., § 73-14-20.1, enacted by Laws 1990, ch. 48, § 1; 1991, ch. 136, § 1; 1991, ch. 248, § 1; 1996, ch. 42, § 7; 1999, ch. 168, § 2; 2018, ch. 79, § 140; 2025, ch. 21, § 3.

### **73-14-21. Board of directors; election; terms.**

A. Each member of the board of directors shall be elected for a term of four years and, unless removed from office, shall serve until his successor is duly elected and has qualified; provided that in the first election immediately following the effective date of the provisions of this act [73-14-18 to 73-14-32 NMSA 1978], candidates for positions 1, 2 and 5 shall be elected for two-year terms each, and candidates for positions 3, 4, 6 and 7 shall be elected for four-year terms each.

B. Vacancies on the board of directors shall be filled by the remaining members of the board of directors for the unexpired term of the director whose office becomes vacant. The person appointed to fill the vacancy shall have the same qualifications as the member whose unexpired term he is completing.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.4, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 4.

### **73-14-22. Board of directors; apportionment.**

The representation on the board of directors of the conservancy district shall be apportioned as follows:

A. three members shall be elected from and by the qualified electors of the most populous county within the conservancy district;

B. one member each shall be elected from and by the qualified electors of those portions of each of the remaining counties in the conservancy district; and

C. one member shall be elected from and by the qualified electors of the conservancy district at large.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.5, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 5.

### **73-14-23. Suspension or removal.**

A member of the conservancy district board may be suspended or removed in the same manner and for the same reasons that a county officer may be suspended or removed.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.6, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 6.

### **73-14-24. Time and procedure for election; rule adoption; election director; election proclamation.**

A. On the first Tuesday after the first Monday in May prior to the middle Rio Grande conservancy district election, an election proclamation shall be published that includes a list of the offices for which a candidate may file, the date and place at which declarations of candidacy shall be filed and the date of the election. The election proclamation shall be published once in a newspaper of general circulation in the counties in which the election shall be held.

B. The members of the boards of directors created pursuant to provisions of Sections 73-14-18 through 73-14-30 NMSA 1978 shall be elected at an election held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in October in 2025 and in each odd-numbered year thereafter.

C. The elections for the members of the board of directors of the conservancy district shall be conducted, counted and canvassed as provided in Sections 73-14-18 through 73-14-30 NMSA 1978 and shall not be governed by or subject to the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978]. The polls may be opened and closed in the same manner as provided for the general election under the Election Code [Chapter 1 NMSA 1978].

D. The board of directors shall adopt procedures as necessary to conduct elections.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.7, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 7; 1990, ch. 48, § 2; 1991, ch. 136, § 2; 1991, ch. 248, § 2; 1996, ch. 42, § 8; 1999, ch. 168, § 3; 2018, ch. 79, § 141; repealed and reenacted by Laws 2025, ch. 21, § 4.

### **73-14-25. Declaration of candidacy; signatures of electors.**

A. A person who desires to become a candidate for election as a member of the conservancy district board of directors shall file a written declaration of candidacy with the election director or election officer at least sixty days before the election. The election director or election officer shall certify the candidates to the board of directors.

B. The declaration of candidacy shall contain:

- (1) a statement that the candidate is a qualified elector of the district and meets the qualifications of a director as required by law;
- (2) the candidate's name, address, county of residence and date of declaration of candidacy;
- (3) the numerical designation of the position on the board of directors for which the person desires to be a candidate;
- (4) if a candidate for a position representing a county in the conservancy district, a petition signed by at least seventy-five qualified electors of the district who reside in that county;
- (5) if a candidate for the position at large in the conservancy district, a petition signed by at least one hundred twenty-five qualified electors; and
- (6) a statement that the person resides within the conservancy district and in the county for which the person desires to be a candidate on the board of directors.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.8, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 8; 1996, ch. 42, § 9; 1999, ch. 168, § 4; 2018, ch. 79, § 142; 2025, ch. 21, § 5.

### **73-14-26. Designation of positions for purposes of election.**

For purposes of election to the board of directors of the conservancy district, each office on the board shall be assigned a position number in numerical sequence beginning with the at-large position, and then next those positions within the most populous county. At all elections the same position numbers shall be used to designate the same offices.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.9, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 9.

### **73-14-27. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.10, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 10; 1991, ch. 136, § 3; 1991, ch. 248, § 3; 1996, ch. 42, § 10; 1999, ch. 168, § 5; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-27, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-28. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.11, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 11; 1996, ch. 42, § 11; 1999, ch. 168, § 6; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-28, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-28.1. Elections.**

The board of directors of the conservancy district shall conduct the election pursuant to Sections 73-14-18 through 73-14-30 NMSA 1978 and shall select an election director as defined in Section 73-14-20 NMSA 1978 to provide election services. The election may be conducted by paper ballot, electronic voting machine or any other state-certified tabulating voting machine.

**History:** Laws 1996, ch. 42, § 12; 2018, ch. 79, § 143; repealed and reenacted by Laws 2025, ch. 21, § 6.

### **73-14-29. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.12, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 12; 1996, ch. 42, § 13; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-29, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-30. Election expenses.**

The conservancy district board shall pay out of the district's treasury those sums necessary to meet the actual expenses of elections. The board may levy a tax or assessment sufficient to meet election expenses on all property that is subject to direct assessment or taxation within the district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.13, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 13.

### **73-14-31. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-11.14, enacted by Laws 1975, ch. 262, § 14; 1996, ch. 42, § 14; 1999, ch. 168, § 7; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-31, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

#### **73-14-31.1. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1996, ch. 42, § 15; 2012, ch. 37, § 1; repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

#### **73-14-31.2. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1996, ch. 42, § 16; repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

#### **73-14-31.3. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1999, ch. 168, § 8; 2012, ch. 37, § 2; repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-32. Repealed.**

### **73-14-33. Organization of the board of directors.**

A. Immediately after their appointment the directors shall meet for the purpose of organizing the board of directors. Each director before entering upon his official duties shall take and subscribe to an oath before an officer authorized to administer oaths, that he will honestly, faithfully and impartially perform the duties of his office, and that he will not be interested directly or indirectly in any contract let by said district, which said oath shall be filed in the office of the clerk.

B. Upon taking the oath, the board shall choose one of their member [members] chairman of the board and president of the district, and shall elect some suitable person secretary of the board, who may or may not be a member of the board.

C. Such board shall adopt a seal, and shall keep in a well-bound book a record of all its proceedings, minutes of all meetings, certificates, contracts, bonds given by employees [employees] and all corporate acts, which shall be open to the inspection of all owners of property in the district, as well as to all other interested parties. It shall have power to make and adopt rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the provisions of this act, for the conduct of the business and affairs of the district, and when adopted, no rule or regulation shall be altered, amended or repealed except upon three (3) days' notice to each member of the board, service to be had by a personal delivery or by mailing a copy of such notice in a sealed envelope, postage fully prepaid, to the address of the director to be served, or at a regular or called meeting at which all directors are present.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 302; C.S. 1929, § 30-302; 1941 Comp., § 77-2712; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-12.

### **73-14-34. Quorum.**

A majority of the directors shall constitute a quorum, and a concurrence of the majority in any matter within their duties shall be sufficient for its determination.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 303; C.S. 1929, § 30-303; 1941 Comp., § 77-2713; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-13.

### **73-14-35. Employment of agents.**

A. The secretary shall be the custodian of the records of the district and of its corporate seal, and shall assist the board on such particulars as it may direct in the performance of its duties. The secretary shall attest, under the corporate seal, all certified copies of the official records and files that may be required of him by this act, or by any person ordering the same and paying the reasonable cost of transcription, and any portion of the record so certified and attested shall prima facie import verity. The secretary shall serve also as treasurer of the district, unless a treasurer is otherwise provided for by the board.

B. The board may also employ a manager or chief engineer, who may be an individual, copartnership or corporation; an attorney, and such other engineers, attorneys and other agents and assistants as may be needful; and may provide for their compensation, which, with all other necessary expenditures, shall be taken as a part of the cost of the improvement. The employment of the secretary, treasurer, manager or chief engineer and attorney for the district shall be evidenced by agreements in writing, which, so far as possible, shall specify the amounts to be paid for their services.

C. The manager or chief engineer shall be superintendent of all the works and improvements, and shall make a full report to the board each year, or oftener, if required by the board, and may make such suggestions and recommendations to the board as he may deem proper.

D. The secretary and treasurer and such other agents or employees of the district as the court may direct, shall furnish corporate surety bonds, at the expense of the district, in amount and form fixed and approved by the court, conditioned upon the faithful performance of their respective duties.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 304; C.S. 1929, § 30-304; Laws 1939, ch. 37, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2714; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-14.

### **73-14-36. Preparation of plans.**

A. Upon their qualification, the board shall prepare or cause to be prepared a plan for the improvements for which the district was created. Such plan shall include such maps, profiles, plans and other data and descriptions as may be necessary to set forth properly the location and character of the work, and of the property benefited or taken or damaged, with estimates of cost and specifications for doing the work.

B. In case the board finds that any former survey made by any other district or in any other manner is useful for the purposes of the district, it may take over the data secured by such survey or such other proceedings as may be useful to it, and may pay therefor an amount equal to the value of such data to said district.

C. Upon the completion of such plan, the board of directors shall hold a hearing thereon to hear objections thereto, shall cause notice thereof to be given by publication in each county into which said district may extend and shall permit the inspection thereof at the office of the district by all interested. Said notice shall fix the time and place for the hearing of all objections to said plan not less than twenty (20) days nor more than thirty (30) days after the last publication of said notice. All objections to said plan shall be in writing and filed with the secretary at the office of the district not more than ten (10) days after the last publication of said notice.

D. After said hearing before the board, the board shall adopt a plan as the official plan of said district. If, however, any person or public corporation objects to said official plan, so adopted, then such person or public corporation may within ten (10) days from

the adoption of said official plan, file in the office of the clerk in the original case establishing the district, their objections in writing, specifying the features of the plan to which objection is made, and thereupon the court, shall fix a day for the hearing thereof before the court, not less than twenty (20) nor more than thirty (30) days after the time fixed for filing objections, at which time the court shall hear said objections and adopt, modify, reject or refer back said plan to said board.

E. If the court should reject said plan, then the board shall proceed as in the first instance under this section to prepare another plan. If the court should refer back said plan to the board for amendment, then the court shall continue the hearing to a day certain without publication of notice. When the court shall approve a plan as the official plan of said district, then a certified copy of the order of the court approving the same shall be filed with the secretary and by him incorporated into the records of the district.

F. The official plan may be altered in detail from time to time until the assessment record herein provided is filed, and of all such alterations the appraisers shall take notice. But after the assessment record has been filed in court, no alterations of the official plan shall be made except as provided in Section 412 [73-15-12 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 305; C.S. 1929, § 30-305; 1941 Comp., § 77-2715; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-15.

### **73-14-37. Powers to execute improvement plans [; facilities for recreation and research]**

The board shall have full power and authority to devise, prepare for, execute, maintain and operate any or all works or improvements necessary or desirable to complete, maintain, operate and protect the works provided for by the official plan, and to that end, may employ and secure men and equipment under the supervision of the chief engineer or other agents, or may in its discretion, let contracts for such works, either as a whole or in parts. The board may authorize the use of suitable conservancy district facilities and properties for purposes of recreation and environmental studies and research.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 306; C.S. 1929, § 30-306; 1941 Comp., § 77-2716; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-16; Laws 1975, ch. 27, § 1.

### **73-14-38. Access to land.**

The board, its employees [employees] and the appraisers hereinafter provided for and their assistants, may enter upon lands within or without the district in order to make surveys and examinations to accomplish the necessary preliminary purposes of the district, or to have access to the work; being liable, however, for actual damage done; but no unnecessary damage shall be done. Any person or corporation preventing such entry shall be guilty of misdemeanor, punishable by fine not exceeding fifty (\$50.00) dollars.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 307; C.S. 1929, § 30-307; 1941 Comp., § 77-2717; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-17.

### **73-14-39. General powers.**

A. In order to protect life and property within the district, and to protect or relieve land subject to overflow or washing, or which is menaced or threatened by the normal flow of flood or surplus or overflow waters of any natural watercourse, stream, canyon, arroyo or wash, whether perennial, intermittent or flood, and in order to effect the protection of life, land and other property in the district and to accomplish all other purposes of the district, the board is authorized and empowered to clean out, strighten [straighten], widen, alter, deepen or change the course or terminus of any ditch, community ditch or acequia, drain, sewer, flume, river, watercourse, pond, lake, creek, arroyo or natural or artificial stream in or out of said district; to fill up any abandoned or altered ditch, community ditch or acequia, drain, sewer, river, flume, watercourse, pond, lake, creek, arroyo or natural or artificial stream, and to concentrate, divert or divide the flow of water in or out of said district; to construct and maintain main and lateral ditches, community ditches or acequias, sewers, canals, flumes, levees, dikes, dams, sluices, revetments, reservoirs, or retarding basins, floodways, wells, pumping stations and syphons and any other works and improvements deemed necessary to construct, preserve, operate or maintain the works in or out of said district; to construct, reconstruct or enlarge or cause to be constructed, reconstructed or enlarged, any and all bridges that may be needed in or out of said district; to construct, reconstruct or elevate highways and streets; to construct or reconstruct any and all of said works and improvements along, across, through or over any public highway, canal, railroad right-of-way, track, grade, fill or cut, in or out of said district; to remove or change the location of any fence, building, railroad, canal or other improvements in or out of said district; and shall have the right to acquire by donation, purchase or condemnation, to construct, own, lease, use and sell, to hold, encumber, control and maintain any easement, water right, acequias, well, railroad right-of-way, canal, sluice, flume, reservoir site, reservoir or retarding basin, mill dam, water power, franchise, park, cemetery or any other public way or place, or any real or personal property, public or private, in or out of said district, for rights-of-way and such other things, or for materials of construction or for any other use not inconsistent with the purposes of this act; and to replot or subdivide land, open new roads, highways, parks, streets and alleys, or change the location of existing ones; and provided, further, that in case the construction provided by the official plan interferes with an irrigation ditch, community ditch or acequia or other works used for applying water to beneficial use the district shall make equivalent provision by means of ditches or works constructed by the district at its expense for supplying such water to such water users to the extent that the same was being lawfully obtained and used through such ditches or works. The district shall have the right to increase at its expense the storage capacity of any reservoirs and to store therein or release therefrom water in excess of the capacity of such reservoirs as developed by any person; but such additional storage so created by the district shall not interfere with the storage and regulation of flow of water as developed by such person prior to such increased storage capacity being added by the district; and, that in case the district shall increase the



storage capacity of any such reservoir, either by adding to the dam, dams or other structures built, or by removing such dam, dams or other structures and rebuilding same, the damages, if any, to such person for the property so utilized or removed shall be ascertained and paid as provided in the case of property taken by the district by right of eminent domain.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 308; C.S. 1929, § 30-308; 1941 Comp., § 77-2718; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-18.

### **73-14-40. Letting contracts.**

When it is determined to let the work by contract, contracts in amounts in excess of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) dollars [sic] shall be advertised after notice by publication as the board shall order, calling for bids, and the board may reject any or all bids, or may let said contract to the lowest or best bidder who shall give a good and approved bond, with ample security, conditioned on the carrying out of the contract. Such contract shall be in writing, and shall be accompanied by or shall refer to plans and specifications for the work to be done, prepared by the chief engineer. Said contract shall be let by the chief engineer, approved by the board, signed by the president and by the contractor, and shall be executed in duplicate; provided, that in case of sudden emergency when it is necessary in order to protect the district, the advertising of contracts may be waived upon the consent of the board, with the approval of the court; provided, further, that the provisions of this section shall not apply if it is determined by the board with the approval of the court that the work be done on force account.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 309; C.S. 1929, § 30-309; 1941 Comp., § 77-2719; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-19.

### **73-14-41. Dominant right of eminent domain.**

A. The district, when necessary for the purposes of this act, shall have a dominant right of eminent domain over the right of eminent domain of private or public corporations [corporations].

B. In the exercise of this right, due care shall be taken to do no unnecessary damage to others, and, in case of failure to agree upon the mode and terms of interference, not to interfere with their operations or usefulness beyond the actual necessities of the case, due regard being given to other public interest [interests] involved.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 310; C.S. 1929, § 30-310; 1941 Comp., § 77-2720; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-20.

### **73-14-42. Condemnation under general law.**

The district shall also have the right, instead of having appraisals made by the board of appraisers, to condemn for the use of the district according to the procedure provided by the Eminent Domain Code [42A-1-1 to 42A-1-33 NMSA 1978] for the appropriation of property taken for public use and [any] property within or without the district not acquired or condemned by the court on the report of the appraisers.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 311; C.S. 1929, § 30-311; 1941 Comp., § 77-2721; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-21; Laws 1981, ch. 125, § 58.

### **73-14-43. Regulations to protect works.**

A. Where necessary, in order to secure the best results from the execution and operation of the plans of the district, and to prevent damage to the district by the deterioration or misuse or by the pollution of the waters of any natural or artificial watercourse therein, the board may make regulations for and may prescribe the manner of building bridges, roads, highways, or fences or other works in, into, along or across any channel, natural or artificial watercourse, reservoir or other construction; and may prescribe the manner in which ditches or other works shall be adjusted to or connected with the works of the district or any watercourse therein; and when not in conflict with the regulations of the state board of health [department of health], may prescribe the manner in which the watercourses of the district may be used for sewer outlets or for disposal of waste.

B. The construction of any works in a manner harmful to the district or to any watercourse therein, and in a manner contrary to that specified by the board, shall be a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not more than one thousand (\$1,000) dollars.

C. The board shall have authority to enforce by mandamus or other legal proceedings all necessary regulations, made by it and authorized by this act, and may remove any harmful construction or may close any opening improperly made. Any person or public corporation wilfully failing to comply with such regulations shall be liable for all damage caused by such failure, and for the cost of renewing any construction damaged or destroyed.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 312; C.S. 1929, § 30-312; 1941 Comp., § 77-2722; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-22.

### **73-14-44. Removal of structures.**

A. For the accomplishment of the official plan, the board of directors of any district shall have full power and authority to improve in alignment, section, grade, location or in any other manner, any watercourse, and they may remove, widen, lengthen, lower, raise or otherwise change any public or private road bridge or railroad bridge, or any flume, aqueduct or telephone, telegraph, gas, oil, sewer, water or other pipelines or any other construction, over, across, in, into, under or through any such watercourse, or may require the same to be done, and the foregoing shall apply to all such changes

specified by the official plan, or reasonably necessary for the accomplishment of the same; provided, however, that whenever any such change is made necessary in any construction because of the failure of the same to permit the free flow of the water in such stream in time of flood, or to permit the necessary enlargement or protection of the channel, then the owner of such construction shall make such change and all adjustments of grade, roadway, track, approach or other construction incidental thereto, without cost to the district, and without any claim for damages against the district; except that the district shall pay the cost of excavating the earth for the enlargement of any channel, or for placing earth for the filling of any channel, where such excavation or filling is required as a part of the official plan in making the changes outlined in this section; but the district shall not be required to make such fill or excavation unless the same would be necessary to the official plan if the construction or work so changed did not exist.

Before the removal, change or modification of any work or construction outlined in this section, the board of directors shall give notice to the owner thereof, requiring that the same be adapted to the official plan. In case such removals, changes or adjustments are not commenced and completed by the owner within the respective times specified therefor in such notice (which time shall be reasonable under all the circumstances) such removals, changes or adjustments may be made by the district, at the expense of the owner.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 313; C.S. 1929, § 30-313; 1941 Comp., § 77-2723; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-23.

### **73-14-45. Passing equipment through bridge or grade.**

In case it be necessary to pass any dredgeboat, or other equipment through a bridge or grade of any person or public corporation, the board shall give notice to the owner of said bridge or grade that the same shall be removed temporarily to allow the passage of such equipment, or that an agreement be immediately entered into in regard thereto. The owner of said bridge or grade shall keep an itemized account of the cost of the removal, and if necessary, of the replacing of said bridge or grade, and the necessary actual cost shall be paid by the district. In case the owner of said bridge or grade shall fail to commence or complete provisions for the passage of said equipment within the time specified in the notice, the board may remove such bridge or grade at its own expense, interrupting traffic in the least degree consistent with good work and without unnecessary damage or delay. In case it shall be hindered or prevented from so doing, the owner of said bridge or grade shall be liable for all damage resulting to the district therefrom.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 314; C.S. 1929, § 30-314; 1941 Comp., § 77-2724; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-24.

### **73-14-46. Surveys and investigations [; flood warning service]**

The board shall also have the right to establish and maintain stream gages, rain gages, a flood warning service with telephone or telegraph lines or telephone and telegraph service, and may make such surveys and examinations of rainfall and flood conditions, stream flow and other scientific and engineering subjects as are necessary and proper for the purposes of the district and they may issue reports thereon.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 315; C.S. 1929, § 30-315; 1941 Comp., § 77-2725; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-25.

### **73-14-47. The use of water.**

A. No sale, lease, assignment, permit or other right in the waters of the district shall be made or granted which shall infringe upon or interfere with the water rights of lands in the district, or with water provided for irrigation purposes on the lands within the district for which benefits have been appraised and assessments levied under this act.

B. All the rights and property of the district in the waters and watercourses thereof, and in their use, shall be exercised in such a manner as to promote the welfare of the district and of all the inhabitants thereof; to promote the safest, most economical and most reasonable use of such waters; to protect the water rights of the lands and landowners of the district; to encourage and promote agriculture and industry and to pay the cost of constructing, maintaining and operating the improvements.

C. The rights of persons or public corporations and of other users of water, to the waters in and of the district for irrigation, water supply, industrial purposes, water power or for any other purposes, shall extend only to such rights as were owned by them or their predecessors prior to their inclusion in the district; and to such use as could be made of such waters if the improvements of the districts had not been made.

D. At the time of the general appraisal of benefits and damages of the district, or at any subsequent time, the board may cause a determination to be made of the conditions and extent of the water rights, and water supply and of the watercourses within the district as they were before the improvements of the district were made, or as they existed at any subsequent time, and they may make a determination of all rights, property, easements or other interests in the waters, or the watercourses, such determination being based upon records of greatest and least flow, upon the evidence of use, or evidence of legal rights, and upon any other evidence and records which may be available.

E. Upon the completion of such determination, the board shall make its report thereon to the court. Thereupon a hearing shall be had, notice shall be given of the pendency of said report and of the hearing, which notice and hearing shall conform as nearly as possible to the notice and hearing on appraisals of benefits and of land to be taken; and the right of appeal shall exist. Such final determination shall be the basis of any future use of the waters in the district; provided that in case any party shall thereafter establish in court any right or property in the waters in the district or the use

thereof, which has not been adjudicated, the existence of such right, or the failure to adjudicate it, shall not affect the operation of this provision nor the findings of the court thereon in any other particular.

F. Where the district acquires by purchase, condemnation or otherwise, water or water rights, or where it conserves, develops or reclaims water, it shall have the rights which go with the appropriation and beneficial use thereof; save and except such use for which benefits have been appraised and assessments levied by the district upon property for irrigation purposes; and the development, conservation or reclamation of water by the district is hereby declared to be an appropriation thereof by the district, and the disposition thereof under the terms of this act is hereby declared to be a beneficial use thereof by said district and by the lands included therein.

G. The expression "greater, better or more convenient use of the waters of the district, or benefit therefrom" as hereafter used, refers to use or benefit which is made greater, better or more convenient by the organization, administration and works of the district, as compared with use or benefit which could be had under the conditions existing before the district was organized.

H. The appraisals of benefits made by the appraisers may include benefits appraised for the greater, better or more convenient use of the waters of the district, or benefit therefrom; but if such benefits are not assessed, as in case of high lying lands for which water supply is at first uncertain, but afterwards is found to be available, the district may provide by contract or other agreement as hereafter provided, for such greater, better or more convenient use, and receive compensation therefor in accordance with the following provisions.

I. Persons, public corporations or others desiring to secure such use of the waters or watercourses of the district, or of the district rights therein, may make application to the board for permission to lease, or purchase for such use. Such application shall state the purposes and character of such use, the period and degree of continuity of such use, the amount of water desired and the place of use. In case any party makes greater, better or more convenient use of the waters of the district without formal application, the fact of such use shall serve all purposes of an application, and the board may proceed to determine a reasonable rate of compensation the same as though formal application has been made. Where it is not possible or reasonable to grant all applications, preference shall be given to the greatest need and to the most reasonable use, as may be determined by the board, subject to the approval of the court. Preference shall be given, first, to domestic and municipal water supply, and no charge shall be made for the use of water taken by private persons for home and farmyard use, or for watering farm stock; second, to supplying water used in irrigation, processes of manufacture, for the production of steam, for refrigerating, cooling and condensing and for maintaining sanitary conditions of stream flow; third, for power development, recreation, fisheries and for other uses. All sales, leases, assignments or other acts of the board affecting the use, sale or lease of the waters of the district under this section, shall be subject to the approval of the court.

J. The board shall not permanently sell, lease, assign, permit or otherwise part with the control by the district of the use of the waters thereof; provided, however, that upon the recommendation of the chief engineer the board may contract to furnish a permanent water supply for lands susceptible of irrigation, at rates to be established as hereinafter provided. Rates for light, power or other services charged by vendees, assignees, lessees or licensees of such board shall be subject at all times to revision and control by state law. Assignments, leases, sales or permissions, except as to contracts hereinbefore authorized, may be made for periods of not greater than ten (10) years, except that with the approval of the court, such assignments, permissions, leases or sales, when necessary to justify investments for constructing and establishing, manufacturing power and industrial plants or works, may be made for longer terms, but not to exceed fifty years. At the termination of the period of such permission, assignments, leases or sales, they shall be renewable for a reasonable period not longer than is provided by this section, on the condition that a new determination be made of a reasonable charge therefor, as herein provided; unless there are other applications on file, the granting of which would result in filling a greater need or a more reasonable use. In case such applications are on file, they shall have preference.

K. The board may make regulations for the determination and measurement of the greater, or better or more convenient use of, or benefit from the water supply of the district, for the purpose of determining rates of compensation, and for the purpose of securing to all parties interested the greatest and best use of the waters thereof. The board shall have power to determine the rates of compensation for such greater, better or more convenient use of, or benefit from the water supply of the district, which rates shall be reasonable, and may require bond to be given to secure the payment for such use.

Upon the determination of any rate, or rates, the board shall make a report of its determination to the court. The court shall thereupon cause personal notice by summons to be given to the parties interested, stating that such a determination of rates has been made, that a hearing before the court will be had thereon on a certain day and that objection may be made at such time to such determination of rates. The hearing may be had before the court, and objection may be made, in the same manner as in case of the appraisal of benefits. Upon the final determination of the matter by the court, the determination of such rates of compensation shall be conclusive and binding for the period set forth in the order of the court; and in the event the said matter is before the court upon an agreement to lease, assign or sell, it shall be binding for the term and under the conditions specified in the lease or other agreement as approved by the court.

L. The court may approve general rates for the use of water under this section, as applying to all cases of the same class, and in cases of such class separate hearings shall not be required.

M. The compensation for greater, better or more convenient use of, or benefit from the waters of the district, may be made by payment according to a unit price per cubic foot of water used, or by a unit price for theoretical horse power developed or in any

other reasonable measurement of value received by reason of the greater, better or more convenient use of, or benefit from the waters of the district. All money received as compensation under the provisions of this section shall be added to the general fund of the district and used for defraying the expenses thereof.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 316; C.S. 1929, § 30-316; 1941 Comp., § 77-2726; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-26.

### **73-14-48. General grant of power.**

The board of directors of any district organized under this act is hereby vested with all powers necessary and requisite for the accomplishment of the purposes for which the district is organized and capable of being delegated by the legislature of the state of New Mexico; and no enumeration of particular powers hereby granted shall be construed to impair any general grant of power herein contained, nor to limit any such grant to power or powers of the same class or classes as those so enumerated.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 317; C.S. 1929, § 30-317; 1941 Comp., § 77-2727; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-27.

### **73-14-49. Declaration of policy.**

It is recognized that in conservancy districts heretofore or hereafter organized under New Mexico law that certain land therein has or may have vested irrigation water rights. While fully recognizing such rights, nevertheless, in the proper operation of such districts, and especially in time of droughts, it is essential that the districts have the specific and unquestioned power to distribute the water remaining available for irrigation and to properly allocate the same for the purposes most essential for the welfare and economy of landowners within the district. To this end, the legislature deems it of manifest importance that conservancy districts have the unquestioned power to make such distribution and allocation of irrigation waters. While such power is present in existing laws, the method of enforcement is doubtful. To avoid any question in the future, this act [73-14-49 to 73-14-53 NMSA 1978] is enacted, with the aforesaid legislative intent and policy in mind.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2727a, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 222, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-28.

### **73-14-50. Distribution of irrigation waters.**

All conservancy districts heretofore organized under the laws of New Mexico, and all such districts hereafter to be organized, are specifically empowered to make such proper and necessary distribution and allocation of the waters available for irrigation within such districts as the boards of directors thereof, in consultation with the chief engineer of such districts, shall determine to be reasonable and proper. The method and manner of distribution and allocation may be altered and changed as often as is

deemed requisite. The decision [decisions] of said board of directors, as determined from time to time, shall be expressed in rules and regulations to be adopted and published as hereinbelow specified.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2727b, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 222, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-29.

### **73-14-51. Rules and regulations.**

The method of distribution and allocation of available irrigation waters shall be set forth in rules and regulations to be adopted by the board of directors of conservancy districts, in consultation with the chief engineer thereof, which said rules and regulations, before becoming effective, shall be published in English only in two issues, one week apart, of one legal newspaper in each county embraced within such conservancy district, and by posting one copy in English only of such rules and regulations at the courthouse of each county within such conservancy district. If there be no newspaper published in any such county, then copies of such rules and regulations shall be posted in English only at three public places within such county, in addition to posting at the county courthouse; the said notices to be posted at least seven days before the effective date of such rules and regulations.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2727c, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 222, § 3; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-30.

### **73-14-52. Enforcement.**

Conservancy districts, having adopted rules and regulations providing for the distribution and allocation of irrigation waters pursuant to the provisions of this act [73-14-49 to 73-14-53 NMSA 1978], shall have all powers available by law to enforce the same, including the right of injunction and mandamus.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2727d, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 222, § 4; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-31.

### **73-14-53. Penalties.**

Any person, partnership, association, private or public corporation or entity wilfully failing to comply with such rules and regulations, and violating same, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than six months or more than one year, or by a fine of not to exceed \$3000 or both such fine and imprisonment within the discretion of the court.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2727e, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 222, § 5; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-32.



### **73-14-54. [Abolition of boards of directors or commissioners of districts having 100,000 acres or less; creation of new boards of directors; powers and duties.]**

That as the same are now constituted under the provisions of "The Conservancy Act of New Mexico," "boards of commissioners," and "boards of directors" of all conservancy districts except as hereinafter provided shall be abolished and shall cease to exist upon the happening of the events hereinafter specified.

In lieu of the boards hereby abolished, there is hereby created within and for each conservancy district, now or hereafter organized and existing under and by virtue of said Conservancy Act of New Mexico, a board of directors, which shall bear the name "Board of Directors of the . . . . . Conservancy District"; shall be a body corporate, may sue and be sued and which shall succeed to, have, exercise, enjoy, assume and perform all of the rights, powers, obligations and duties now by law vested in, conferred upon, imposed upon or required of, the boards hereby abolished.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2728, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-33.

### **73-14-55. Boards of directors; membership; qualifications.**

The boards of directors created in Sections 73-14-54 through 73-14-69 NMSA 1978 shall consist of five directors, each of whom must own real property within the conservancy district that is subject to conservancy district appraisals, assessments, levies and taxes, and each of whom must actually reside within the conservancy district and also within the county from which the director is elected.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2729, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-34; 2018, ch. 79, § 144.

### **73-14-56. [Election of board members.]**

All of said directors shall be elected at large by the qualified electors of the entire district.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2730, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 3; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-35.

### **73-14-57. Definition of "qualified electors".**

The term "qualified electors", as used in Sections 73-14-54 through 73-14-69 NMSA 1978, means only those persons who have reached the age of majority and, for at least six months prior to the election, have owned, during the entire six-month period, real

property situated within the district that is subject to conservancy district appraisals, assessments, levies and taxes.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2731, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 4; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-36; Laws 1973, ch. 134, § 1; 2018, ch. 79, § 145; 2025, ch. 21, § 7.

### **73-14-58. Terms; vacancies.**

Each director shall be elected for a term of six years from and after the date of election and, unless removed from office as provided in Section 73-14-59 NMSA 1978, shall serve until a successor is duly elected and has qualified; provided that at the first election, one director shall be elected for a term of two years, two for a term of four years and two for a term of six years, to be determined according to counties if there is land in any district in more than one county, by the board calling the election. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired term of the director whose office becomes vacant.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2732, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 5; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-37; 2018, ch. 79, § 146.

### **73-14-59. [Suspension or removal of directors.]**

Any elected director may be suspended or removed from office by order or judgment of the district court of the county of said director's residence, in the same manner, under the same procedure and for the same causes as are or may be provided by the laws governing the removal of county officers.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2733, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 6; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-38.

### **73-14-60. [Board empowered to fill vacancies.]**

The board of directors, hereby created, shall have the power to fill any vacancy in its membership for the unexpired term of the member in whose office such vacancy occurs.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2734, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 7; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-39.

### **73-14-61. Notice of candidacy; signatures of electors.**

Any qualified elector who desires to become a candidate for election as a director shall, at least forty days prior to the election, file with the secretary of the board of directors then in office a written notice of candidacy, which shall state the candidate's name and residence and the term for which the candidate is running within the

conservancy district. If the candidate is a candidate at large, the candidate's notice of candidacy shall be signed by twenty qualified electors resident within the district. If the candidate is a candidate only from that portion of the district that lies within one county, the candidate's notice of candidacy shall be signed by ten qualified electors who reside within that particular portion of the district and county from which the candidate seeks to be elected.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2735, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 8; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-40; Laws 1975, ch. 41, § 1; 2018, ch. 79, § 147; 2025, ch. 21, § 8.

## **73-14-62. Time, place and procedure for election.**

A. The five director-members of the board of directors created by Sections 73-14-54 through 73-14-69 NMSA 1978 shall be elected on the first Tuesday of October of the year 1943 and of each succeeding sixth year thereafter at an election for districts having less than one hundred thousand acres. The five director-members of the boards of directors of conservancy districts formed after July 1, 1952 shall be elected on the first Tuesday of October 1959 and of each succeeding sixth year thereafter at a general election.

B. Not less than thirty days prior to said election, the board of directors then in office shall meet and, by written resolution, which shall be preserved among the permanent records of the board, select a voting place within each voting precinct or voting division thereof within the conservancy district and shall select three judges of election to conduct the election at the place so selected. Those judges shall be qualified electors, as herein defined, and residents of the precinct within which they are appointed to act and shall serve without pay. The resolution shall appoint one of those judges to receive the ballots and post a notice of election. Not less than five days thereafter, the secretary of said board shall notify each judge so selected of the judge's appointment as such and send to the judge selected to receive the ballots four copies of a notice of election, which shall state the time and purpose thereof, the place where held within the precinct and the names of the judges selected for such precinct and said notices shall be posted at the four most prominent places within the precinct as soon as received.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2736, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 9; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-41; Laws 1959, ch. 313, § 1; 2018, ch. 79, § 148; 2025, ch. 21, § 9.

### **73-14-62.1. Election rules and procedures; forms; notice of election; ballots; polling places; absentee voting; canvass of election returns; certification.**

The board of directors may promulgate necessary and reasonable rules for the administration of its elections, including provisions for: public notice of elections; selection of election judges; opening and closing of polling places; the printing and form of ballots; mail or absentee voting; voting locations; instructions to voters; canvassing of election returns; and certification of elections.

**History:** 1978 Comp., § 73-14-62.1, enacted by Laws 2025, ch. 21, § 10.

### **73-14-63. Repealed.**

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2737, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 10; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-42; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-63, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-64. Repealed.**

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2738, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 11; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-43; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-64, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-65. Repealed.**

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2739, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 12; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-44; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-65, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-66. [Election expenses; payment; levy of tax.]**

The board of directors of conservancy districts are hereby authorized to pay out of the treasury all sums necessary to meet the actual expenses of elections and to levy a tax, upon all property within said district which is subject to district assessment or taxation, which shall be sufficient to meet election expenses.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2740, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 13; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-45.

### **73-14-67. [Election violations; penalty.]**

Whoever, not being a qualified elector as herein defined, shall vote at the election herein provided for, or being a judge of election shall wilfully miscount the ballots cast or shall wilfully make false certificate of the number of votes received by each candidate, or otherwise falsely certify election results; or any canvassing officer who shall wilfully falsely canvass and declare the results of said canvass, and any director or secretary of the board of directors who shall wilfully refuse to perform the duties upon him imposed by this act [73-14-54 to 73-14-69 NMSA 1978], shall be deemed guilty of a felony and upon conviction shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one year or more than five years and [or] by fine not to exceed \$5000, or both such fine and imprisonment within the discretion of the court.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2741, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 14; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-46.

### **73-14-68. Audit of district records; levy.**

Not less than once every two years said board shall have an audit of the records and books of said district, and shall levy and collect assessments for the [that] purpose. Said audit shall be made by a private firm or auditor approved by the secretary of finance and administration.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2742, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 15; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-47; Laws 1977, ch. 247, § 199.

### **73-14-69. Application of provisions of act.**

A. The provisions of this act [73-14-54 to 73-14-69 NMSA 1978] shall not apply to nor be construed as affecting any conservancy districts organized to conserve, protect or develop the waters of underground streams, channels, artesian basins, reservoirs or lakes having reasonably ascertainable boundaries where such waters have been placed to beneficial use. The provisions of this act shall not apply to nor be construed as affecting conservancy districts having more than 100,000 acres, formed prior to July 1, 1952, whether agricultural or otherwise, included within said conservancy district, subject to conservancy assessment. The provisions of this act do not apply to conservancy districts to which the provisions of Sections 73-14-70 through 73-14-88 NMSA 1978 apply.

B. This act shall not take effect as to any conservancy district in which the irrigation system is under construction, and no election of directors shall be held therein, until the main canals in such district are in such condition that water can be delivered therefrom for irrigation upon lands in said district; and the first election of directors in any such district shall be held on the first Tuesday of October after the water can be delivered for irrigation from said canals upon the lands in said conservancy district.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-2743, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 126, § 16; 1953 Comp., § 75-28-48; Laws 1959, ch. 313, § 2; 1961, ch. 67, § 1.

### **73-14-70. Applicability of act.**

The provisions of Sections 73-14-70 through 73-14-88 NMSA 1978 apply only to conservancy districts in existence and having between fifteen thousand and thirty thousand acres within their exterior boundaries on July 1, 1961 and to all conservancy districts formed after that date. The provisions of these sections do not apply to any conservancy district organized to conserve, protect or develop the waters of underground streams, channels, artesian basins, reservoirs or lakes having reasonably ascertainable boundaries where those waters have been placed in beneficial use.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-49, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 2.

### **73-14-71. Definition of "qualified elector"; qualified elector list.**

As used in the provisions of Sections 73-14-70 through 73-14-88 NMSA 1978, "qualified elector" means a natural person who has reached the age of majority and who, for at least six months prior to the election, has owned, either in community or separately, real property located within the district and subject to conservancy district appraisals, assessments, levies and taxes.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-50, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 3; 1973, ch. 138, § 34; 2018, ch. 79, § 149; 2025, ch. 21, § 11.

### **73-14-72. Board of directors; powers; election; terms.**

A. Boards of directors of conservancy districts shall consist of five members each of whom shall be a qualified elector of the district, and shall be bodies corporate, may sue and be sued and shall have all of the statutory rights, powers, obligations and duties conferred upon or required of the boards of directors of conservancy districts created under the Conservancy Act of New Mexico [73-14-3 NMSA 1978].

B. Members of boards of directors shall be elected at large from the entire conservancy district and shall serve for a term of six years except as provided in Section 73-14-75 NMSA 1978 which establishes staggered terms for the first elected board.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-51, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 4; 1963, ch. 18, § 1.

### **73-14-73. Elections; when held.**

A. The first election for conservancy districts existing on July 1, 1961 and eligible under the provisions of Section 74-14-74 NMSA 1978 to have an elected board of directors shall be held on the first Tuesday in October 1961.

B. Subsequent elections shall be held every two years following the year 1961 and shall be held on the first Tuesday of October.

C. Conservancy districts formed after July 1, 1961 shall hold their first election as provided in Section 73-14-74 NMSA 1978.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-52, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 5; 2018, ch. 79, § 150; 2025, ch. 21, § 12.

### **73-14-74. Eligibility of district to hold election.**

A. No election shall be held in an existing conservancy district until the main canals in that district are in such a condition that water can be delivered from them for irrigation on the lands within the district.

B. The first election in any district formed after July 1, 1961, or in a district existing on July 1, 1961, and having an appointed board of directors shall be held on the first Tuesday of October occurring in an odd-numbered year after the requirements of Subsection A of this section are fulfilled.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-53, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 6; 1965, ch. 76, § 6; 2018, ch. 79, § 151; 2025, ch. 21, § 13.

### **73-14-75. Election of first board of directors.**

At the first election of board members for a conservancy district one of the candidates shall be elected for a two year term, two candidates for four year terms and two candidates for six year terms.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-54, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 7.

### **73-14-76. Vacancies on board; how filled.**

If a vacancy occurs on a conservancy district board of directors the remaining board members shall appoint by majority vote a qualified elector of the district to serve the unexpired term of the vacant office.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-55, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 8.

### **73-14-77. Suspension or removal of board members.**

A member of a conservancy district board of directors may be removed in the same manner and for the same reasons that a county officer may be removed.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-56, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 9.

### **73-14-78. Notice of candidacy; signatures of electors.**

A. Any qualified elector who desires to become a candidate for election as a member of a conservancy district board of directors shall file a written notice of candidacy with the secretary of the board at least twenty days before the election.

B. A notice for candidacy shall state:

- (1) the candidate's name and address; and
- (2) the numerical designation of the office position on the board for which the person desires to be a candidate.

C. In addition to the requirements of Subsection B of this section, a notice for candidacy shall be signed by at least ten qualified electors within the conservancy district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-57, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 10; 2018, ch. 79, § 152; 2025, ch. 21, § 14.

### **73-14-79. Designation of board members for purposes of election.**

For purpose of election only, at the first election in a conservancy district the two year term [of] office is designated as position 1, the two four year terms as positions 2 and 3 and the two six years terms as positions 4 and 5. At all elections subsequent to the first these same numbers shall be used to designate the office or offices for which persons become candidates.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-58, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 11.

#### **73-14-79.1. Election rules and procedures; forms; notice of election; ballots; polling places; absentee voting; canvass of election returns; certification.**

The board of directors may promulgate necessary and reasonable rules for the administration of its elections, including provisions for: public notice of elections; selection of election judges; opening and closing of polling places; the printing and form of ballots; mail or absentee voting; voting locations; instructions to voters; canvassing of election returns; and certification of elections.

**History:** 1978 Comp., § 73-14-79.1, enacted by Laws 2025, ch. 21, § 15.

#### **73-14-80. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-59, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 12; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-80, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

#### **73-14-81. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-60, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 13; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-81, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

#### **73-14-82. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-61, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 14; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-82, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

#### **73-14-83. Repealed.**



**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-62, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 15; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-83, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-84. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-63, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 16; 1999, ch. 168, § 9; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-84, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-85. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-64, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 17; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-85, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-85.1. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1996, ch. 42, § 17; repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-86. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-65, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 18; 1978 Comp., § 73-14-86, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-14-87. Election expense.**

The board of directors of conservancy districts are [is] authorized to pay out of the treasury those sums necessary to meet the actual expenses of elections, and the board may levy a tax sufficient to meet election expenses on all property that is subject to direct assessment or taxation within the district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-66, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 19.

### **73-14-88. Election violations; penalty.**

A. No director or secretary of a board of directors of a conservancy district shall wilfully fail to perform any of the duties imposed upon him by the provisions of Sections 73-14-70 through 73-14-88 NMSA 1978.

B. No person who is not a qualified elector shall vote at a conservancy district election unless he casts his vote with a reasonable belief that he is a qualified elector.

C. No election judge shall wilfully miscount ballots or intentionally falsify the results of an election.

D. A person who commits a violation of this section is guilty of a felony and upon conviction shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one year nor more than five years or [by] a fine of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), or both.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-28-67, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 67, § 20.

### **73-14-89. Penalty; false voting.**

A. False voting consists of:

- (1) voting or offering to vote with the knowledge of not being a qualified elector;
- (2) voting or offering to vote in the name of any other person;
- (3) voting or offering to vote more than once in the same election;
- (4) inducing, abetting or procuring or attempting to induce, abet or procure a person known to not be a qualified elector to vote; or
- (5) inducing, abetting or procuring or attempting to induce, abet or procure a person who, having voted once in any election, votes or attempts to vote again at the same election.

B. Whoever commits false voting is guilty of a fourth degree felony.

**History:** Laws 1996, ch. 42, § 1.

### **73-14-90. Unlawful possession of absentee ballot material; penalty.**

A. Unlawful possession of absentee ballot material consists of the unauthorized possession at any time of absentee ballot material or obtaining absentee ballot material in an unlawful manner. As used in this section, "absentee ballot material" means an absentee ballot, absentee ballot envelope or an absentee ballot return.

B. Whoever commits unlawful possession of absentee ballot material is guilty of a fourth degree felony.

**History:** Laws 1996, ch. 42, § 2.

### **73-14-91. Unlawful opening of ballot box; penalty.**

A. Unlawful opening of a ballot box consists of opening any ballot box or inspecting or removing the contents of a ballot box without lawful authority or conspiring with others to have the same done.

B. Whoever commits unlawful opening of a ballot box is guilty of a fourth degree felony.

**History:** Laws 1996, ch. 42, § 3.

### **73-14-92. Falsifying an election document; penalty.**

A. Falsifying an election document consists of knowingly circulating, presenting or offering to present for the signature of another person a nominating petition that does not clearly show on the face of the petition the name of the candidate, the date of the election, the address at which the candidate resides, the candidate's county of residence and the position on the conservancy district board for which the candidate seeks nomination.

B. Whoever commits falsifying an election document is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be imprisoned in the county jail for a definite term of less than one year or shall pay a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or both the imprisonment and fine in the discretion of the judge.

**History:** Laws 1996, ch. 42, § 4.

## **ARTICLE 15**

### **Conservancy Districts; Appraisal of Benefits**

#### **73-15-1. Appointment of appraisers.**

A. At the time of making its order organizing the district or at any time thereafter, the court, or board of judges as the case may be, in the manner provided shall appoint three appraisers (herein described and referred to as appraisers or the board of appraisers), whose term of office shall be until the appraisals of benefits and damages are filed and finally determined by court and whose duty it shall be to appraise the lands or other property within and without the district to be acquired for rights-of-way, reservoirs and other works of the district, and to appraise all benefits and damages accruing to all land within or without the district by reason of the execution of the official plan.

B. Two of said appraisers shall be freeholders residing within the state of New Mexico, who may or may not own lands within said district. Each of the appraisers shall, before taking up his duties, take and subscribe to an oath that he will faithfully and impartially discharge his duties as such appraiser, and that he will make a true report of such work done by him.

C. The said appraisers shall at their first meeting elect one of their own number chairman, and the secretary of the board or his deputy shall be ex-officio secretary of said board of appraisers during their continuance in office. A majority of the appraisers

shall constitute a quorum, and a concurrence of the majority in any matter within their duties shall be sufficient for its determination.

D. The court or board of judges as the case may be, shall fill all vacancies in the board of appraisers, or may appoint a new board, all in the manner provided, as occasion may require, which new board, if appointed, shall perform all the duties and exercise all the powers of the appraisers of the district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 401; C.S. 1929, § 30-401; 1941 Comp., § 77-2801; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-1.

### **73-15-2. Appraisals.**

A. During the preparation of the official plan, the appraisers shall examine and become acquainted with the nature of the plans for the improvement and of the lands and other property affected thereby, in order that they may be better prepared to make appraisals.

B. When the official plan is filed with the secretary he shall at once notify the appraisers, and they shall thereupon proceed to appraise the benefits of every kind to all land and property within or without the district, which will result from the organization of said district and the execution of the official plan, except as otherwise provided in Section 316 [73-14-47 NMSA 1978] of this act; and also to appraise the damages sustained [sustained], and the value of the land and other property necessary to be taken by the district for which settlement has not been made by the board. In the progress of their work, the appraisers shall have the assistance of the attorney, engineers, secretary and other agents and employees of the district.

C. The appraisers shall also appraise the benefits and damages, if any, accruing to public corporations, as political entities, and to the state of New Mexico, and the same shall be taken and considered the same as benefits or damages, as the case may be, to land or other property, and to public health, safety, convenience and welfare.

D. Before appraisals of compensation and damages are made, the board may report to the appraisers the parcels of land it may wish to purchase and for which it may wish appraisals to be made, both for easement and for purchase in fee simple, and the board may specify the particular purpose for which and the extent to which an easement in any property is desired, describing definitely such purpose and extent. Wherever instructed so to do by the board, appraisers shall appraise lands which it may be necessary or desirable for the district to own, and when instructed by the board so to do, they shall appraise both the total value of the land and also the damages due to an easement for the purposes of the district.

Upon such appraisals being confirmed by the court, the board shall have the option of paying the entire appraised value of the property and acquiring full title to it in fee simple, or of paying only the cost of such easement. Upon written demand by the

owner, such option shall be exercised by the board within ninety (90) days after the date of the final judicial determination of such appraisals.

E. In appraising the value of property taken, no additional damages shall be allowed on account of any increase in value of property due to the execution of the official plan. The appraisers in appraising benefits and damages shall consider only the effect of the execution of the official plan.

F. The appraisers shall appraise all damages which may, because of the execution of the official plan, accrue to real or other property, either within or without the district, which damages shall also cover easements acquired by the district for all of the purposes of the district, unless otherwise specifically stated.

G. The appraisers in making appraisals shall give due consideration and credit to any other works or other systems of protection already constructed, or under construction, which form a useful part of the work of the district according to the official plan. Where the appraisers or a jury, in case one be called, return no appraisal of damages to any property, it shall be deemed a finding by them that no damages will be sustained.

H. In determining the amount which each tract of land will be benefited by the improvements of the district, especially drainage systems, the appraisers shall consider the damage done to low land from seepage, and saturation by irrigation water from high land, and the necessity for the carrying off of waste water, and such high land shall be considered as being benefited to the extent and in the amount that such lands are responsible for damage to low lands from seepage and saturation by irrigation water.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 402; C.S. 1929, § 30-402; 1941 Comp., § 77-2802; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-2.

### **73-15-3. Land affected outside the district.**

A. If the appraisers find that land not embraced within the boundaries of the district will be affected by the proposed improvement, or should be included in the district, they shall appraise the benefits and damages to such land, and shall file a special report in court regarding the land which, in their opinion should be included in the district, giving a description thereof and their appraisal thereof.

B. The appraisers shall also report to the court any land which, in their opinion, should be eliminated from the district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 403; C.S. 1929, § 30-403; 1941 Comp., § 77-2803; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-3.

### **73-15-4. Notice of hearing on land excluded from or taken into district [; order of court].**

A. If the special report of the appraisers includes recommendations that land be included in the district, or that land be excluded from the district, the court shall by order, fix a place and time for hearing thereon, and thereupon the clerk of the said court shall cause notice by publication (Schedule Form V) [73-17-24 NMSA 1978] to be made of the filing of the said special report and of the time and place of the hearing thereon, as is provided for a hearing on the petition for the creation of a district.

B. As to the notice to be given owners of land to be excluded from the district, it will be sufficient to notify each owner of that fact by mail.

C. Upon such hearing the court shall make and enter such order with respect to lands to be included in or excluded from the district as the facts and provisions of this act require.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 404; C.S. 1929, § 30-404; 1941 Comp., § 77-2804; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-4.

### **73-15-5. Report of appraisers.**

A. The appraisers shall prepare a tabulated report of all of their findings which shall be bound in book form and shall be known as the conservancy appraisal record. Such record (Schedule Form VI) [73-17-24 NMSA 1978] shall contain the names of the owners of property appraised as they may appear on the tax rolls or from the records of the office of the probate clerk and ex-officio recorder; a description of the property appraised; the amount of benefits appraised; the amount of damages appraised; and the appraised value of land or other property which [which] may be taken for the purposes of the district.

B. The appraisers shall also report any other benefits or damages or any other matter which, in their opinion, should be brought to the attention of the court. No error in the names of the owners of property or in the description thereof shall invalidate said appraisal or the levy of assessments or taxes based thereon, if sufficient description be given to identify such property.

C. When the report is completed, it shall be signed by at least a majority of the appraisers and deposited with the clerk who shall file it in the original case.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 405; C.S. 1929, § 30-405; 1941 Comp., § 77-2805; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-5.

### **73-15-6. Notice of hearing on appraisals.**

A. Upon the filing of the report of the appraisers, the court shall by order fix places and times not less than thirty (30) days nor more than sixty (60) days after the report of the appraisers is filed, for hearing thereon, and thereupon the clerk shall cause notice by publication (Schedule Form VII) [73-17-24 NMSA 1978] to be made in each county in

the district, of the filing of the said report, and of the times and places of the hearing thereon.

B. It shall not be necessary for said clerk to name the parties interested, nor to describe separate lots or tracts of land in giving said notice, but it shall be sufficient to give such description as will enable the owner to determine whether or not his land is covered by such description.

C. Where lands in different counties are mentioned in said report, it shall not be necessary to publish in each county a description of all the lands in the district, but only of that part of the said lands situate in the county in which publication is made.

D. The conservancy court shall fix a date when hearing on exceptions shall be heard in each county within the conservancy district, and all exceptions to the appraisal report shall be tried and heard in the county in which such property affected is located, by the special master, or otherwise; provided trial and hearing in such county is claimed in the exception.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 406; C.S. 1929, § 30-406; 1941 Comp., § 77-2806; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-6.

### **73-15-7. Hearing on appraisals.**

A. Any property owner may accept the appraisals in his favor of benefits and of damages and of land to be taken, made by the appraisers, or may acquiesce in their failure to appraise damages in his favor, and shall be construed to have done so unless he shall within ten (10) days after the last publication provided for in the preceding section [73-15-6 NMSA 1978], file written exceptions to said report or to any appraisal of either benefits or of damages, or of the value of land to be taken.

B. All exceptions except in cases where a trial by jury is demanded shall be heard by the court beginning on the date set for the said hearing, or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, and determined in advance of other business so as to carry out, liberally, the purposes and needs of the district.

C. The court may, if it deems necessary, by order, direct the return of the report to the appraisers for further consideration and amendment. If the court directs the appraisers to revise and amend the roll, specifying the changes to be made, a further hearing thereon may be had without new notice. If, however, the appraisal roll or the report, as a whole is referred back to the appraisers, the court shall not resume the hearing thereon without new notice, as for an original hearing thereon.

D. The conservancy court may appoint a special master, to take testimony and conduct hearings on all controversies arising under provisions of this act, whenever a jury trial is not guaranteed thereon by the constitution. Such special master together with the chief engineer, or his assistant shall attend at convenient places within the

district after giving notice by publication of the time and place of such hearings, and shall endeavor to adjust such controversies. He shall have power to administer oaths, issue subpoenas and compel the attendance of witnesses. He shall take the evidence on each such controversy and report the same with his findings and conclusions and recommendations thereon to the conservancy court.

E. The special master shall be paid for his services a per diem compensation to be fixed and approved by the court, together with his expenses including a stenographer, which shall be paid out of any available funds of the conservancy [conservancy] district.

F. The special master shall not report the evidence unless the exceptant requires him to do so, and deposits the fees required to transcribe such testimony. Failure to make such requirement and to pay such fees within five days after such hearing shall be taken and considered a waiver of reporting testimony and an election to rely on the report so made as to fact.

G. A person aggrieved by any report of such special master must, within ten days after it is filed, file written exceptions to said report specifying his grounds of objection thereto; failing in which he shall be considered to have acquiesced in such report as made.

H. Immediately on filing such exceptions with the court the clerk thereof shall set the same for hearing before the court on a day certain set apart by the court for hearing such exceptions.

I. Upon hearing such exceptions to the report the court shall enter such final judgment thereon as the facts shall warrant or return the matter to the master for further proceedings.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 407; C.S. 1929, § 30-407; 1941 Comp., § 77-2807; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-7.

### **73-15-8. Order on appraisals.**

A. If it appear to the satisfaction of the court, after having heard and determined all exceptions, that the estimated cost of constructing the improvements contemplated in the official plans [plan] is less than the benefits appraised, then the court shall by order approve and confirm the report of the appraisers as so modified and amended, and the findings and appraisals in such approved and confirmed report shall become the award of the appraisers.

B. In considering the findings and the appraisals made by the appraisers, the court shall take cognizance of the official plan and of the degree to which it is effective for the purposes of the district. In case the court shall find that the estimated benefits appraised are less than the estimated total cost of the execution of the official plan, exclusive of interest on deferred payments; or that the official plan is not suited to the requirements



of the district, it may at its discretion return said official plan to the board, with an order directing it to prepare new or amended plans; or it may by order dissolve the district, after having provided for the payment of all expenses theretofore incurred.

C. Where the property or rights of any property owner of the district located or to be exercised in another judicial district, are finally adjudicated in the conservancy court, and the matter or right so decided is other than appraisal of benefits and damages and does not involve the policy of the district or the general right of other property owners therein, the court shall upon motion of the property owner so aggrieved, filed within five days after such decision, grant a rehearing of such matter and transfer the trial thereof to the district court of the county in which such property or right in question is located.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 408; C.S. 1929, § 30-408; 1941 Comp., § 77-2808; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-8.

### **73-15-9. Jury trials.**

Whenever provision is made in this act for trial of any controversy by a jury, it shall be taken and construed to mean only those controversies in which trial by jury is guaranteed by the constitution of the state of New Mexico. All other controversies provided herein to be heard by the court or jury shall be heard and decided by the judge without the intervention of a jury.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 409; C.S. 1929, § 30-409; 1941 Comp., § 77-2809; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-9.

### **73-15-10. Entry after deposit of award [pending jury trial].**

No property shall be taken until just compensation has been paid according to law. But where a trial by jury is demanded under the preceding section [73-15-9 NMSA 1978], the board may pay into court, in money, the amount allowed by the appraisers, with the costs, and thereupon the court shall make an order admitting the said district into possession of the property. And thereupon the board may enter into undisturbed possession of the property and rights involved. The right of entry provided herein shall be a cumulative remedy and additional to the district's right of possession during the pendency of condemnation proceedings under the provisions of Chapter XXXIV of the Codification of 1915, and all amendatory or supplementary acts thereto.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 410; C.S. 1929, § 30-410; 1941 Comp., § 77-2810; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-10.

### **73-15-11. Filing order.**

A. Upon the entry of the order of the court approving the report of the appraisers, the clerk shall transmit to the secretary a certified copy of the said order, and of the appraisals as confirmed by the court.

B. When any proceedings on a trial had in any other court have been finally determined, the clerk of the court deciding the same shall certify the amount of each item of the judgment to the clerk having the original case, who shall file the same therein and thereupon transmit certified copies of the same to the secretary as in this section above provided, who shall thereupon complete the conservancy appraisal record.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 411; C.S. 1929, § 30-411; 1941 Comp., § 77-2811; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-11.

### **73-15-12. Change of official plan.**

A. The board at any time, when necessary to fulfill the objects for which the district was created, may alter or add to the official plan; and when such alterations or additions are formally approved by the board and by the court, and are filed with the secretary, they shall become parts of the official plan for all purposes.

B. Where such alterations or additions in the judgment of the court neither materially modify the general character of the work, nor materially increase resulting damages, for which the board is not able to make amicable settlement, nor increase the total cost more than ten (10%) percent above the [that] estimated in the official plan, no action other than a resolution of the board shall be necessary for obtaining the approval of such alterations or additions by an order of the court.

C. In case the proposed alterations or additions materially modify the general character of the work; or materially modify the resulting damages; or materially reduce the benefits, for which the board is not able to make amicable settlement; or materially increase the benefits in such a manner as to require a new appraisal; or increase the total cost more than ten (10%) percent, above that estimated in the official plan; the court shall direct the appraisers (which may be the original board, or a new board appointed by the court on petition of the board of directors) to appraise the property to be taken, benefited or damaged by the proposed alterations or additions.

D. Upon the completion of the report of the appraisers, notice shall be given and a hearing had on their report in the same manner as in the case of the original report of the appraisers; provided, that where a few property owners are affected, the clerk may, on order of the court, if found to be more economical and convenient, give personal notice as provided in said order of the pendency of the report of said appraisers, instead of notice by publication; and provided further, that when the only question at issue is additional damages or reduction of benefits to property, due to modification in or additions to the official plan, the board may, if practicable, make settlement with the owners of the property damaged, instead of having appraisals made by appraisers. In case such settlements are made, notice and hearing need not be had.

E. After district bonds have been sold, as hereinafter provided, in order that their security may not be impaired, no reduction shall be made in the amount of uncontested

benefits appraised or costs assessed against any property in the district; but in lieu of any reduction in assessment, if by reason of a modification in or addition to the official plan an excessive assessment is made under the provisions of Section 504 [73-16-4 NMSA 1978] hereof, the excess shall be paid to the property owner in cash. This provision shall apply to all changes in appraisals under this act.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 412; C.S. 1929, § 30-412; 1941 Comp., § 77-2812; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-12.

### **73-15-13. Property exempt and later liable to assessment.**

If property in any district organized under this act is not liable to assessment at the time of the execution of the work, but afterwards, during the period when such work is being paid for, become [becomes] liable to assessment, such property shall thereupon be appraised and assessed.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 413; C.S. 1929, § 30-413; 1941 Comp., § 77-2813; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-13.

### **73-15-14. Subsequent appraisals.**

In case any property within or without any district is benefited, which for any reason was not appraised in the original proceedings or was not appraised to the extent of benefits received; or in case any person or public corporation shall make use of or profit by the works of any district to a degree not compensated for in the original appraisal; or in case the board finds it necessary subsequent to the time when the first appraisals are made, to damage or take any additional property, the board, at any time such condition becomes evident, shall direct the appraisers to appraise the benefits, or the enhanced benefits received, or damages or the value of property taken; and the proceedings outlined for appraising lands not at first included within the boundaries of the district shall in all matters be conformed to, including notice to the party or parties interested; or the board may, at its discretion, make settlement with such parties for such use, benefit, damage or property taken.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 414; C.S. 1929, § 30-414; 1941 Comp., § 77-2814; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-14.

### **73-15-15. Validation of irregular proceedings.**

A. No fault in any notice or other proceeding shall affect the validity of any proceeding under this act, except to the extent to which it can be shown that such fault resulted in a material denial of justice to the property owner complaining of such fault.

B. In case it be found upon a hearing, that by reason of some irregularity or defect in the proceedings, the appraisal has not been properly made, the court may, nevertheless, on having proof that expense has been incurred which is a proper charge

against the property of the complainant, make an order finding the amount of benefits to said property, and appraising the proper benefits accordingly, subject to a claim for a jury as provided, and thereupon said land shall be assessed as other land equally benefited.

C. In the event that, either before or after the issuance of bonds, the appraisal of benefits, either as a whole or in part, be declared by any court of competent jurisdiction, to be invalid by reason of any defect or irregularity in the proceedings therefor, whether jurisdictional or otherwise; the court where the original case is pending is hereby authorized and directed; on the application of the board, or of any holder of any bonds which may have been issued, promptly and without delay, to remedy all defects or irregularities as the case may require, by directing and causing to be made in the manner hereinbefore provided, a new appraisal of the amount of benefits against the whole or any part of the property in the said district as the case may require.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 415; C.S. 1929, § 30-415; 1941 Comp., § 77-2815; 1953 Comp., § 75-29-15.

## **ARTICLE 16**

### **Conservancy Districts; Financial Administration**

#### **73-16-1. Moneys.**

A. The moneys of every district shall consist of the following separate funds:

(1) "preliminary fund," by which is meant the proceeds of the level rate assessment authorized by Section 502 [73-16-2 NMSA 1978];

(2) "construction fund," by which is meant the proceeds of levies made against the special benefits appraised, equalized and confirmed;

(3) "maintenance fund," by which is meant the proceeds of a special assessment to be levied annually for the purpose of maintenance, upkeep, administration and current expenses;

(4) "general fund," by which is meant the moneys received by the district from any other source than hereinbefore set forth, and which may be withdrawn and placed in any other fund by order of the board.

B. The treasurer upon receipt of any moneys, shall credit the respective funds entitled thereto with the same. Money in the respective funds shall be withdrawn only upon warrants properly executed, in accordance with the form and requirements adopted by the board.

C. No warrants shall be drawn against the preliminary fund or the maintenance fund until an assessment-levying resolution shall have been properly passed by the board duly entered upon its records; and no bonds shall be issued against the construction fund until an assessment-levying resolution shall have been properly passed by the board and duly entered upon its records, and until the property owners shall have been given an opportunity, for a period of not less than sixty (60) days, to pay in cash the assessments so levied against their respective properties.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 501; C.S. 1929, § 30-501; 1941 Comp., § 77-2901; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-1.

### **73-16-2. Preliminary fund.**

A. As soon as any district shall have been organized under this act and a board shall have been appointed and qualified, such board shall have the power and authority to fix the amount of a uniform assessment upon the property within the district not to exceed six (6) mills for every dollar of assessed valuation thereof, as a level rate to be used for the purpose of paying the expenses of organization, of assessing benefits and damages, for surveys and plans and for other incidental expenses which may have been incurred prior to the time when money is received from the sale of bonds or otherwise.

B. The said assessment shall be levied by resolution of the board; shall be known as the preliminary fund assessment; and the amount of assessment shall be certified to the boards of county commissioners of the various counties in which the district, or any portion thereof, is located, and by them included in their next annual levy for state and county purposes. Said amount shall be collected for the use of such district in the same manner as are taxes for county purposes, and the revenue laws of the state for the levy and collection of taxes for county purposes, except as herein modified, shall be applicable for the levy and collection of the amount certified by the board of such district as aforesaid, including the enforcement of penalties and forfeiture for delinquent taxes. All collections made by the county treasurer pursuant to such levy shall be paid to the treasurer of the district on or before the tenth day of the next succeeding calendar month and a list of the payers, the amounts paid by each and the property covered thereby shall accompany such remittance.

C. If such items of expense have already been paid in whole or in part from other sources, they may be repaid from the receipts of such levy, and such levy may be made although the work proposed may have been found impracticable or for other reasons is abandoned.

D. In case the proceeds of such assessment, including those of any other assessment previously made for the preliminary fund, exceeds, [exceed] the total amount of money borrowed for the preliminary fund or the amount needed to complete the preliminary expenses, the surplus shall be placed in the general fund of the district and used to pay cost of construction, except that the same may be refunded or adjusted

as hereinafter provided if deemed more just and so ordered by the court; provided, however, that if the district be dissolved the amount of surplus, if there be any, shall be prorated and refunded to the landowners paying such assessment.

E. The information collected by the necessary surveys, the appraisals of benefits and damages and other information and data are hereby declared to constitute benefits for which said assessment may be levied. In case a district is dissolved or abandoned, before the work is constructed, the data, plans and estimates which have been secured shall be filed with the clerk of the court in which the district was organized, and shall be matters of public record available to anyone interested.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 502; C. S. 1929, § 30-502; 1941 Comp., § 77-2902; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-2.

### **73-16-3. Power to borrow money for the preliminary fund.**

A. In order to facilitate the preliminary work, the board may borrow money at a rate of interest not exceeding eight (8%) percent per annum, and as evidence of the debt so contracted, may issue and sell or may issue to contractors or others, negotiable evidences of debt (herein called warrants), and may pledge the preliminary assessment for the repayment thereof. If any warrant so issued by the board is presented for payment and is not paid for want of funds in the treasury, that fact, with the date of presentation, shall be endorsed on the back of such warrant, which shall thereafter draw interest at the rate specified in the endorsement, not exceeding eight (8%) percent per annum, until such time as there is money on hand sufficient to pay the amount of said warrant with interest.

B. In case of a district organized under the provisions of Chapter 140 of the Laws of New Mexico, 1923, where money has been borrowed for the preliminary fund, such borrowed money shall be repaid from the construction fund or general fund when available and all assessments made under said Chapter 140 of the Laws of 1923 for the preliminary fund shall be refunded or cancelled; provided, however, that if said construction fund for any cause shall not be available upon the maturity of indebtedness incurred for the preliminary fund, the board of directors of said district shall fix such an ad valorem assessment upon the property within the district as will be sufficient to repay such indebtedness, as a level rate to be used for the purpose of repaying said borrowed money, and not to exceed two (2) mills for every dollar of assessed valuation in addition thereto, and the board of directors may anticipate the collection of such levy by the issuance of warrants for the repayment of money so borrowed; provided, however, that the total amounts permitted to be levied for such preliminary fund and for the repayment of any such indebtedness shall not exceed in the aggregate eight mills for every dollar of assessed valuation. Said assessment shall be levied by resolution of the board; shall be known as preliminary fund - refunding assessment; and said assessment shall be certified to the boards of county commissioners of the various counties in which the district or any portion thereof is located, and by them included in their next annual levy for state and county purposes. The manner of collection by the county treasurers, and

the laws applicable to such collections and handling of the same, shall be as heretofore provided in Section 502 [73-16-2 NMSA 1978] hereof.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 503; C.S. 1929, § 30-503; 1941 Comp., § 77-2903; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-3.

#### **73-16-4. Construction fund.**

A. After the list of property, with the appraised benefits as approved by the court, or that part thereof from which no appeal is pending, has been filed with the secretary, then from time to time, as the affairs of the district may demand, the board shall levy on all property upon which benefits have been appraised, and assessment of such portion of said benefits as may be found necessary by said board to pay the cost of the appraisal (except as paid out of the preliminary fund), the preparation and execution of the official plan, including superintendence of construction and administration during the period of construction, plus ten (10%) percent of said total, to be added for contingencies, but not to exceed, in the total of principal, the appraised benefits so adjudicated. In case of acreage tracts of twenty acres or less, on which benefits are appraised, in order to reduce the expense of administration, and to promote convenience in making payments, the installments of interest during the five-year period prior to the payment of the first annual installment of principal, shall be capitalized and added to the principal of the assessment; provided that any owner of an acreage tract of twenty (20) acres or less may elect within the period, and in the manner provided in Section 505 [73-16-6 NMSA 1978] hereof, to pay installments of interest as in the case of other lands.

B. The said assessment shall be levied by resolution of the board, shall be known as the construction fund assessment, shall be apportioned to and levied on each tract of land or other property in said district in proportion to the benefits appraised, and not in excess thereof, and in case bonds are issued as hereinafter provided, then the amount of interest which will accrue on such bonds, as estimated by said board, shall be included in and added to the said assessment but the interest to accrue on account of the issuing of said bonds shall not be construed as a part of the cost of construction in determining whether or not the expenses and costs of making said improvement are or are not equal to or in excess of the benefits appraised.

C. As soon as said assessment is levied, the secretary shall prepare in duplicate a construction fund assessment record of the district. The said record shall be in the form of a well-bound book endorsed and named "construction fund assessment record of . . . . . conservancy district," which endorsement shall also be printed at the top of each page thereof.

D. The construction fund assessment record shall include a table or schedule (Schedule Form VIII) [73-17-24 NMSA 1978] showing in properly ruled columns:

(1) the names of the owners of the property to which benefits are appraised, which may be as they appear in the order of the court confirming the appraisals, and, in case of appraisals against a town, city, county or other public corporation, the name of the individual owners need not be given, but only the name of such corporation;

(2) the descriptions of the items of property appraised and assessed, arranged by counties;

(3) the total amount of benefits appraised against each item of property;

(4) the total assessment levied against each item of property to which benefits have been appraised; in this column of the record provision shall be made for the entry of successive levies of assessments;

(5) suitable columns shall be provided for entering the options and elections for paying the assessments provided for in this act;

(6) in successive columns, the construction fund installments (or if bonds are issued, these columns may be designated bond fund installments) both principal and interest, one column for each installment, with provision for the entry of installments of successive levies, if any, and suitable blank columns in which the county treasurer shall record the several installment amounts, principal and interest, as collected by him, and the names of the person or persons paying the same.

E. Where successive levies of assessments are made for the construction fund, the construction fund assessment record shall contain suitable notations to show the number of levies and the amount of each, to the end that it may disclose the aggregate of all levies for the construction fund.

F. Upon the completion of the construction fund assessment record it shall be signed by the president, and the seal of the district shall be thereunto affixed and attested by the signature of the secretary, and the same shall thereafter become a permanent record in the office of said district.

G. If it shall be found at any time that the total amount of assessments levied is insufficient to pay the cost of the works set out in the official plan or of additional work done, the board may levy such additional assessments and may make such amendments or supplements to the construction fund assessment record, from time to time as may be necessary to provide funds to complete the work, provided the total of all such assessments exclusive of interest, does not exceed the total of benefits appraised.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 504; C.S. 1929, § 30-504; 1941 Comp., § 77-2904; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-4.



### **73-16-5. Election for approval of construction fund assessment levy of certain districts; form of ballot; supplemental levies.**

A. In all cases excepting those hereinafter excluded, as soon as the first construction fund assessment levy is made the board shall call an election to be held not less than sixty days after notice of the election is completed by publication. The procedure for and conduct of the election shall be that provided for election of boards of directors who are elected. The question to be referred to the voters shall be the approval or rejection of the construction fund assessment levy resolved by the board. The form of ballots shall be substantially as follows:

#### **CONSTRUCTION FUND ASSESSMENT LEVY FOR**

\_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT

(Name of District)

FOR the construction fund assessment levy of the district in the maximum total sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ ..... [ ]

AGAINST the construction fund assessment levy of the district in the maximum total sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ ..... [ ]

B. If the majority of voters are against the levy, upon exhibit to the court of the returns so proving, the district shall be dissolved after insuring payment of all outstanding debts. If the majority of voters are for the levy, upon exhibit to the court of the returns so proving, the levy shall be ordered executed and the secretary shall prepare the construction fund assessment record of the district.

C. Thereafter, from time to time, as the affairs of the district may demand, the board may make supplemental levies for the construction fund; provided, that the aggregate of all these supplemental levies shall not exceed ten percent of the first levy approved in the election or, in principal, the appraised benefits adjudicated, whichever is less; provided, further, that if for any reason the affairs of the district shall demand a supplemental levy in excess of ten percent, an election as herein provided shall be required to approve and order them into execution, and in the event they are rejected the district shall not execute supplemental levies in excess of the limits above stated; and provided further, that in no case shall a levy be submitted to election where the amount thereof exceeds in principal the appraised benefits adjudicated.

Nothing in this section applies to any district which has commenced or completed any phase of improvements pursuant to official plans, or to any district containing between fifteen thousand to thirty thousand acres.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-30-4.1, enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 123, § 1.

### **73-16-6. Payment of construction fund assessments.**

A. When the construction fund assessment record is placed on file in the office of the district, notice by publication shall be given to property owners that they may pay their assessments. Any owner of property assessed for the execution of the official plan shall have the privilege of paying such assessment to the treasurer within sixty (60) days from the time such publication is completed, and the amount to be paid shall be the full amount of the assessment without interest. When such assessment has been paid the secretary shall enter upon the said assessment record opposite each tract for which payment is made the words "paid in full," and such assessment shall not relieve the property owner from the payment of a maintenance assessment nor from the payment of any further assessments (not exceeding the total of benefits appraised) which may be necessary as herein provided.

B. Failure to pay the whole construction fund assessment within said period of sixty (60) days shall be conclusively considered and held an election on the part of all persons interested, whether under disability or otherwise, to pay such assessment in installments as hereinafter provided. All persons so electing to pay in installments, shall be conclusively held and considered as consenting to said official plan and all work thereunder, the issuance of bonds and the payment of interest thereon; and such election shall be conclusively held and considered as a waiver of any and all right to question the power or jurisdiction of the district to construct the works set forth in said official plan, the regularity or sufficiency of the proceedings or the validity or the correctness of such assessment; provided, however, that any public corporation may, within sixty (60) days, elect to pay, in whole or in part, the amount assessed against such corporation in not more than ten (10) annual installments, beginning at the time of the next annual levy of taxes by such corporation, but nothing herein contained shall be construed to relieve such corporation from liability for successive levies of assessments, not exceeding the amount of benefits appraised.

C. In case of such election to pay in installments, the construction fund assessment shall be payable in not more than forty (40) annual installments of principal, the first of which installments shall be payable in five years and the last in not more than forty-five (45) years after the filing of the construction fund assessment record in the office of the district; with interest in all cases on the unpaid principal, computed and payable semiannually from the filing of the construction fund assessment record, at a rate not exceeding eight percent (8%) per annum, all as may be determined by the board by resolution.

The assessments against agricultural lands shall be so apportioned that no one of the first ten installments of the construction fund assessment shall exceed the sum of three dollars (\$3.00) per acre.

D. Subject to the foregoing requirements, all installments, both of principal and interest, shall be payable at such times as may be determined by the board by resolution.

E. Upon the failure to pay any installment, whether of principal or interest, when due, the whole amount of the unpaid principal of such installment and accrued interest thereon, shall thereafter draw interest at the rate of one percent (1%) per month or fraction of a month until the day of sale, as hereinafter provided; but at any time prior to the day of sale, the owner may pay the amount of all unpaid and overdue installments, with interest at one (1%) percent per month or fraction of a month and all penalties accrued.

F. After the expiration of the period of sixty days within which the property owners may pay their respective assessments, as limited herein, the treasurer shall certify to the board the aggregate of the amount so paid, thereupon the board may pass and spread upon its records a bonding resolution in which shall be stated the amount of the construction fund assessment, and the amount thereof paid as aforesaid; and, in the same resolution shall apportion the uncollected assessment into installments or levies, provide for the collection of interest upon the unpaid installments and may order the issuance of conservancy bonds (in an amount not exceeding ninety (90%) percent of the levy) in anticipation of the collection of said installments. The residue of the tax so levied (not less than ten (10%) percent) shall constitute a contingent account to protect the bonds from casual default, and if not needed for this purpose, may be transferred from time to time to the maintenance fund.

G. Provided, however, that after the expiration of the sixty (60) day period hereinbefore set out, the board may, upon written request of an owner of property within the district, authorize the treasurer to accept payment of the full amount of assessment then outstanding on such property together with interest thereon to the next interest-paying date of outstanding bonds, if in their judgment it is to the best interests of the district to accept such payment, but nothing herein contained shall be construed to relieve such property from the lien of any successive assessments which may be made not exceeding the amount of benefits appraised. In case such payments are tendered and accepted after bonds have been sold, the proceeds from such payments shall be used in the following prescribed manner to purchase and retire outstanding bonds of the district of the issue for which the assessment so paid had been levied. When an amount sufficient for the retirement of one or more bonds has been received, the board shall ask for and receive sealed bids from at least three reputable persons or firms on the number of bonds desired to be purchased. The bids shall state the number of bonds offered for sale, the serial number and maturity date of each such bond and the price including unpaid interest, at which the bond or bonds are offered. The board shall accept the offer which gives the greatest saving to the district in principal and interest over the life of the bonds so offered for sale, provided, however, that the board may reject all bids and request new bids if in their judgment the bids made are unsatisfactory.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 505; C.S. 1929, § 30-505; Laws 1941, ch. 153, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2905; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-5.

### **73-16-7. Conservancy bonds.**

#### A. Issuance.

(1) The board may, if in its judgment it seems best, issue conservancy bonds (Schedule Form IV) in coupon or registered form in an amount not to exceed ninety percent of the total amount of the construction fund assessments, exclusive of interest, levied under the provisions of this act to mature at annual intervals within fifty years, commencing not later than five years after date, as may be determined by the board, both principal and interest payable at a place or places determined by the board and designated in the bonds.

(2) The bonds shall show on their face the purpose for which they are issued and shall be payable out of money of the construction fund. The bonds may be payable to bearer or the registered owner and, except for bonds issued in book entry or similar form without the delivery of physical securities, shall be signed by the president, and the seal of the district shall be thereunto affixed and attested by the signature of the secretary. Installments of interest may be evidenced by coupons bearing a facsimile of the signature of the treasurer. In case any officer whose signature or certificate appears upon bonds or coupons issued pursuant to this act ceases to be an officer before the delivery of the bonds to the purchaser, such signature or certificate shall nevertheless be valid and sufficient for all purposes the same as if he had remained in office until the delivery of the bonds.

B. Disposal. All bonds, when executed, shall be delivered to the treasurer of the district, who shall sell the bonds in such quantities and at such times as the board of directors may order to meet the payments for the works and improvements of the district. The bonds may be sold at, above or below par, but they shall be sold at such a price that the net effective interest rate of the bonds shall not exceed the maximum net effective interest rate permitted by the Public Securities Act [6-14-1 to 6-14-3 NMSA 1978], as hereafter amended and supplemented. No bonds of the district shall be sold until after notice of the sale has been published in a newspaper of general circulation in the district and in recognized financial journals published in the cities of Chicago and New York once a week for four successive weeks preceding the sale, describing the issue and terms and fixing a time and place for receiving and opening sealed bids.

The board may reject all offers or bids received as a result of such notice and then sell the bonds at private sale; but the board shall not sell the bonds at private sale on terms less advantageous to the district than the best bid so received until after the public sale has been again advertised.

#### C. Payment.

(1) A sufficient amount of the assessments shall be appropriated by the board for the purpose of paying the principal and interest of bonds, and the same shall, when collected, be set apart in a separate fund for that purpose and no other. Any expenses incurred in the issuance and sale of the bonds and in paying bonds and interest thereon may be paid out of any funds in the hands of the treasurer.

(2) The board, in making assessment levies as herein provided, shall take into account maturing bonds and interest on all bonds and shall make ample provision for the payment thereof. In case the proceeds of the original assessments made under the provisions of this act are not sufficient punctually to pay the principal of and the interest upon all bonds issued hereunder, then the board shall make such additional levy as may be necessary for such purposes. Under no circumstances shall any assessment levies be made that will in any manner or to any extent impair the security of any bond issued hereunder or the fund available for the payment of the principal thereof and interest thereon. No bond issued hereunder or the assessment made to pay the same shall have a priority of lien over any other bond issued or assessments made hereunder.

D. District Treasurer.

(1) The treasurer shall, prior to receiving and accepting the bonds as provided aforesaid and in addition to the bond required, at the time of taking office as provided by Section 73-14-35 NMSA 1978, furnish a corporation surety company bond at the expense of the district, executed to the district, conditioned that he shall account for and pay over as required by law and as ordered by the board, any money received by him on the sale of the bonds or from any other source and that he will sell and deliver the bonds to the purchaser thereof, under and according to the terms herein prescribed and not otherwise, and that he will, when ordered by the board, return to the board, duly canceled any and all bonds not sold; which bond shall be filed in the office of the clerk, who shall produce the same for inspection or for use as evidence whenever or wherever legally required.

(2) The treasurer shall promptly report all sales of bonds to the board. The board shall issue warrants upon the treasurer at the proper time for the payment of the maturing bonds so sold and the interest payment coming due on all bonds sold, and the treasurer shall place sufficient funds at the place of payment to pay the same. In case warrants are not issued by the board as herein provided, then the treasurer shall of his own accord place funds at the place of payment, and the canceled bonds and coupons, if any, shall be accepted in lieu of such warrants.

(3) The successor in office of any such treasurer shall not be entitled to the bonds or the proceeds thereof until he has complied with all the foregoing provisions applicable to his predecessor in office; provided, however, that if it should be deemed more expedient to the board, as to money derived from the sale of bonds issued or from any other source, the board may, by resolution, select some suitable bank or banks or other depository, which depository shall give good and sufficient bond, as temporary or assistant treasurer or treasurers, to hold and disburse the money on orders of the board as the work progresses, until such fund is exhausted or transferred to the treasurer by the order of the board. For such deposit, the district shall receive not less than two percent interest a year. The funds derived from the sale of bonds shall be used for the purpose of paying the cost of the works and improvements and such costs, expenses, fees and salaries as may be authorized by law and shall be used for no other purpose.

#### E. Pledging.

(1) If at the time when the bonds are ready to be issued the board is of the opinion that the bonds cannot advantageously be issued and sold in whole or in part, the board may sell parts only of the entire issue or may pledge not to exceed ten percent of the issue as collateral to a loan, but no partial sale or pledge shall be made without the order of the board made and entered of record, and no pledge shall be made at a greater margin than at the rate of one hundred dollars (\$100) of bond principal for ninety dollars (\$90.00) of loan.

(2) The district may borrow money from the United States government and provide for the repayment thereof in the manner provided for the payment of bonds, and the board may make any necessary regulations to provide for such payment. The board may also pledge the bonds for the work done by the United States government in cooperation with the district.

#### F. Validity.

(1) This act shall, without reference to any other act of the legislature be full authority for the issuance and sale of the bonds in this act authorized, including refunding bonds; which bonds when executed and sealed in conformity with the provisions of this act and when sold or pledged in the manner prescribed herein and the consideration therefor received by the district, shall not be invalid for any irregularity or defect in the proceedings for the issue, sale or pledge thereof and shall be incontestable in the hands of the bona fide purchasers or holders thereof for value. No proceedings in respect to the issuance of any such bonds shall be necessary except such as are required by this act.

(2) A party who has not sought a remedy against any proceeding under this act until after bonds have been sold shall not for any cause have an injunction against the collection of taxes or assessment for the payment of the bonds.

#### G. Registration.

(1) A district may, by recital in its coupon bonds, agree to register its coupon bonds either as to principal only or as to both principal and interest at the option of the bondholder. Whenever the owner of any coupon bond issued pursuant to the provisions of this act presents the bond to the treasurer or to such bank or other depository as the board may, for such purpose, designate as registrar, with a request for the conversion of the coupon bond into a registered bond, the treasurer, bank or other depository shall stamp, print or write upon the coupon bond so presented, either upon the back or the face thereof, as may be convenient, a statement to the effect that the bond is registered in the name of the owner and that thereafter the principal or the interest and principal of the bond are payable to the registered owner. Thereafter and from time to time, the bond may be transferred by the registered owner in person or by attorney duly authorized upon presentation of the bond for registration as before, a similar statement

being stamped, printed or written thereon. Such statements stamped, printed or written upon any such bond may be substantially in the following form:

"This bond is registered in the name of (here insert name of owner) pursuant to the provisions of the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, and the interest and principal (or principal only) thereof are hereafter payable to such owner.

.....Treasurer (or  
registrar)  
.....Conservancy  
District.

Date ....."

(2) When any bond is registered as aforesaid, the principal and interest of the bond shall be payable to the registered owner, except in the case of a coupon bond registered as to principal only, in which case the principal shall be payable to such person, unless the bond is discharged from registering by being registered as payable to bearer. Upon the registration of a coupon bond as to both principal and interest, the treasurer shall also cut off and cancel the coupons. The treasurer of the district shall enter in a register of bonds to be kept by him, or in a separate book, the fact of the registration of the bond and the name of the registered owner of the bond, so that the register or book shall at all times show what bonds are registered and the name of the registered owners.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 506; C.S. 1929, § 30-506; 1941 Comp., § 77-2906; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-6; Laws 1983, ch. 265, § 59.

### **73-16-8. Bonds tax exempt.**

All bonds issued by any district pursuant to this act shall be exempt from all state, county, municipal, school and other taxes imposed by any taxing authority of the state of New Mexico.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 507; C.S. 1929, § 30-507; 1941 Comp., § 77-2907; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-7.

### **73-16-9. Bonds, investment of state funds.**

All bonds issued by any district pursuant to this act shall be considered as such interest-bearing securities as the permanent funds of the state of New Mexico may be invested in as provided by law.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 508; C.S. 1929, § 30-508; 1941 Comp., § 77-2908; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-8.

## **73-16-10. Maintenance fund.**

A. Upon the substantial completion of the improvements of the district, or any unit thereof, and on or before the first day of September in each year the board may levy an assessment on all property and upon public corporations subject to assessment under this act, to maintain, operate and preserve the improvements made, to strengthen, repair and restore the same when needed or to defray the current expenses of the district.

B. The said assessment shall be levied by resolution of the board, shall be known as a maintenance assessment, shall be apportioned upon the basis of the total appraisal of benefits accruing for original and subsequent construction and shall not exceed one (1%) per centum thereof in any one year unless the court shall by its order authorize an assessment of a larger percentage.

C. As soon as said assessment is levied, the secretary shall prepare, in duplicate, a maintenance fund assessment record of the district. The said record shall be in the form of a well-bound book, endorsed and named "Maintenance Fund Assessment Record of . . . . . Conservancy District," which endorsement shall also be printed at the top of each page thereof.

D. The maintenance fund assessment record shall include a table or schedule (Form IX) [73-17-24 NMSA 1978] showing in properly ruled columns:

(1) the names of the owners of the property to which benefits are appraised, which may be as they appear in the decree of the court confirming the appraisals, and, in case of appraisals against a town, city, county or other public corporation, the name of the individual owners need not be given, but only the name of such corporation;

(2) the description of the items of property appraised and assessed, arranged by counties;

(3) the total maintenance assessment levied against each item of property;

(4) blank columns in which the treasurer shall enter payments as made, and the names of the persons paying the same.

E. Where successive levies of assessments are made for the maintenance fund, the maintenance fund assessment record shall contain suitable notations to show the number of levies and the amount of each, to the end that it may disclose the aggregate of all levies for the maintenance fund.

F. Upon the completion of the maintenance fund assessment record it shall be signed by the president of the district, and the seal of the district shall be thereunto affixed and attested by the signature of the secretary and the same shall thereafter become a permanent record in the office of the said district.



G. The amount of the said assessment paid by the owner of any property or by any public corporation shall not be credited against the benefits appraised against such property, or public corporation, but the maintenance assessment shall be in addition to any assessment that has been or can be levied against the benefits so appraised.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 509; C.S. 1929, § 30-509; 1941 Comp., § 77-2909; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-9.

### **73-16-11. Power to borrow money for the maintenance fund.**

A. In anticipation of the collection of maintenance assessments, the board may borrow money at a rate of interest not exceeding eight (8%) percent per annum, and as evidence of the debt so contracted may issue and sell, or may issue to contractors or others, negotiable evidence of debt (herein called warrants) and may pledge (after it has been levied) the said maintenance assessments for the repayment thereof.

B. If any warrant so issued by the board is presented for payment and is not paid for want of funds in the treasury, that fact, with the date of presentation, shall be endorsed on the back of such warrant, which shall thereafter draw interest at the rate specified in the endorsement, not exceeding eight (8%) percent per annum, until such time as there is money on hand sufficient to pay the amount of said warrant with interest.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 510; C.S. 1929, § 30-510; 1941 Comp., § 77-2910; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-10.

### **73-16-12. Readjustment of maintenance fund assessments.**

A. Whenever the owners or representatives of twenty-five (25%) per centum or more of the acreage or value of the lands in the district shall file a petition in the court in which the original petition was filed, stating that there has been a material change in the values of the property in the district since the last previous appraisal of benefits, and praying for a readjustment of the appraisal of benefits for the purpose of making a more equitable basis for the levy of the maintenance fund assessment, the court shall by order fix a time and place for a hearing thereon, and thereupon the clerk shall give notice by publication of the filing of and hearing upon said petition, in such manner as the court shall provide in the order for such hearing.

B. Upon the hearing of said petition, if said court shall find that there has been a material change in the value of property in said district since the last previous appraisal of benefits, the court shall order that there be a readjustment of the appraisal of benefits for the sole purpose of providing a basis upon which to levy the maintenance assessments of said district. Thereupon the court shall direct the appraisers to make such readjustment of appraisals in the manner provided in this act, and said appraisers shall make their report, and the same proceedings shall be had thereon, as nearly as may be, as are hereinbefore provided for the appraisal of benefits accruing for original construction; provided, that in making the readjustment of the appraisal of benefits said

appraisal shall not be limited to the aggregate amount of the original or any previous appraisal of benefits, and that after the making of such readjustment the limitation of the annual maintenance assessment to one (1%) per centum of the total appraised benefits, shall, unless otherwise ordered by the court, apply to the amount of benefits as readjusted; and provided further, that there shall be no such readjustment of benefits oftener than once in ten (10) years.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 511; C.S. 1929, § 30-511; 1941 Comp., § 77-2911; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-11.

### **73-16-13. Assessment of public corporations.**

Whenever an assessment shall be levied against a public corporation, a certified copy of that portion of the construction fund assessment record or the maintenance fund assessment record, or both, as the case may be, relating to property in each public corporation, properly signed by the president with the seal of the district thereunto affixed and attested by the signature of the secretary, shall be delivered to the governing or taxing body of each such public corporation.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 512; C.S. 1929, § 30-512; 1941 Comp., § 77-2912; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-12.

### **73-16-14. Duties of officers of public corporations.**

A. Whenever an assessment is levied against a public corporation, and is finally determined, it shall be the duty of the governing or taxing body of such public corporation immediately to take all the legal and necessary steps to provide for the payment of the same. It shall be the duty of the said governing or taxing body of such public corporation in its next annual levy succeeding the determination aforesaid, to provide for the said assessment by levying a uniform rate upon all the taxable property within the boundaries of said public corporation, and certify the same to the board of county commissioners of the county in which such corporation is located, whose duty it shall be to proceed to certify the same for collection, for the benefit of the district, in like manner and with like remedies and penalties as is provided by law for collection of other assessments or taxes, for the benefit of the said public corporation.

B. The county treasurer shall receive, collect and pay the same to the treasurer as is herein provided for assessments of other property.

C. Nothing in this section shall prevent the assessment of the real estate of others situated within the corporate limits of such public corporation, which may be subject to assessment for special benefits to be received.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 513; C.S. 1929, § 30-513; 1941 Comp., § 77-2913; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-13.

## **73-16-15. Annual levy.**

A. After the expiration of the sixty-day period in which the construction fund assessment may be paid, and each year thereafter, if necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act. The board shall determine, order and levy the total assessments to be collected annually for the purpose of paying district bonds, principal and interest and other needs, uses and purposes for which the construction fund is created; and for the needs, uses and purposes for which the maintenance fund is created.

B. Upon the passage of the resolution by the board levying the said assessments, the treasurer shall enter the same in the respective construction fund assessment record and maintenance fund assessment record, tabulating and extending the said records as herein provided.

C. On or before the first day of September of each year in which assessments are levied for the construction fund or maintenance fund, or both; that portion of the construction fund assessment record, or the maintenance fund assessment record or both, as the case may require, relating to the property in each county, certified by the board to be the construction fund assessment record, or the maintenance fund assessment record, as the case may be, signed by the president, attested by the signature of the secretary with the seal of the board thereto affixed, shall be delivered to the county assessor of each county wherein property assessed is located, and such records so certified shall be sufficient warrant for the levy, assessment and collection of the assessments therein contained and for the certification thereof by boards of county commissioners as in case of state and county taxes.

D. It shall be the duty of the assessor of each county to receive the said records as tax or assessment books and to make and enter the assessment therein set forth upon the tax rolls of the county at the time state and county taxes are assessed and entered according to law.

E. Such assessment shall become due and shall be collected during each year at the same time and in the same manner that state and county taxes are due and collectible; and if further assessments in any year are necessary, to effectuate the provisions hereof, such assessment shall be levied, evidenced and certified as herein provided in apt time and not later than the first day of December in such year, to the assessor of each county in which the property subject to such assessment is situate, and with like effect as in case of other assessments.

If a county treasurer shall wilfully neglect or fail to collect any assessment provided for herein at the time of the collection of other taxes, he shall be subject to a penalty of one hundred (\$100) dollars for each such failure, unless the collection of the assessment has been enjoined by order of a court of competent jurisdiction; such penalty to be recovered in a suit brought by the board to the use of the district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 514; C.S. 1929, § 30-514; 1941 Comp., § 77-2914; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-14.

### **73-16-16. Lien of assessments.**

A. All assessments provided for in this act, together with all interest thereon and all penalties for default in payment of the same, and all costs in collecting the same, shall, from the date of filing, in the county or counties where lands affected thereby are situated, to wit:

(1) the certificate of preliminary fund assessment with the county commissioners;

(2) the construction fund assessment record with the assessor; and

(3) the maintenance fund assessment record with the assessor, constitute a perpetual lien in amount not in excess of the benefits severally appraised, upon all the lands and other property against which such assessments shall be levied, as provided in this act, to which only the lien for general or special state, county, city, town, village or school taxes shall be paramount, and no sale of such property to enforce any general or special state, county, city, town, village, school tax or other lien shall extinguish the perpetual lien of such assessments; provided, however, that assessments levied under this act shall not in any event be a personal liability against the owner, but shall constitute a lien upon the property only.

B. In the event of any dissolution or disincorporation of any district organized pursuant to the provisions of this act, such dissolution or disincorporation shall not affect the lien of any assessment for benefits imposed, or the liability of any property in such district to the levy of any future assessment for the purpose of paying the principal of and interest upon any bonds issued hereunder.

C. In case of said event, or in the event of any failure on the part of the officers of any district to qualify and act or in the event of any resignations or vacancies in office, which shall prevent action by the said district or by its proper officers, it shall be the duty of the county assessor and of all other officers charged in any manner with the duty of assessing, levying and collecting taxes for public purposes in any county, municipality or political subdivision in which such land shall be situated, to do and perform all acts which may be necessary and requisite to the collection of any such assessment which may have been imposed, and to the levying, imposing and collecting of any assessment which it may be necessary to make for the purpose of paying the principal and interest of said bonds. Any holder of any bonds issued, or any person or officer being a party in interest, may either at law or in equity by suit, action or mandamus, enforce and compel performance of the duties required by this act, of any of the officers or persons mentioned.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 515; C.S. 1929, § 30-515; 1941 Comp., § 77-2915; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-15.

### **73-16-17. Revenue laws of state [applicable].**

The revenue laws of this state for the assessment, levying and collection of taxes for state and county purposes, except as herein modified, shall be applicable for the purposes of the district in the collection of assessments including the enforcement of penalties and forfeiture for delinquent taxes. All interest and penalties that may be collected on delinquent assessments levied and assessed for district purposes shall be by the respective county treasurers delivered to the treasurer as herein provided for the delivery of assessments collected by such county treasurer.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 516; C.S. 1929, § 30-516; 1941 Comp., § 77-2916; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-16.

### **73-16-18. Division of assessment.**

When any property has been divided, sold or transferred, the county treasurer may receive district assessments on a part of any tract, piece or parcel of land or other property, and give his receipt accordingly only when the deed or transfer of said property shows the agreed division of said assessments and the approval of the board of the district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 517; C.S. 1929, § 30-517; 1941 Comp., § 77-2917; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-17.

### **73-16-19. County takes property subject to lien of district assessments.**

When any county shall take and hold any tax sale certificate or the title to any property under the provisions of this act, or of any taxing act of this state, such taking and holding shall be subject to the lien and charge of all district assessments, made, levied and assessed under the provisions of this act, and such district assessments shall be and become collectible as are other district assessments when the tax sale certificate or title to property taken and held by the county shall by sale or assignment become vested in any person.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 518; C.S. 1929, § 30-518; 1941 Comp., § 77-2918; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-18.

### **73-16-20. County commissioners cannot rebate district assessments.**

County commissioners shall have no power to abate, reduce or compromise by any order, sale or any other means or device whatsoever, any district assessment made, levied and assessed under the provisions of this act.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 519; C.S. 1929, § 30-519; 1941 Comp., § 77-2919; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-19.

### **73-16-21. Board may be purchaser on sale.**

The board shall have the power to bid in and hold for the use and benefit of the district and with like effect as any other purchaser, any property sold for delinquent taxes or district assessments and to purchase from the county or other owner the tax sale certificate or duplicate tax sale certificate outstanding against any property within the district. At the expiration of the period of redemption under any tax sale of property within the district, the board may, at its election pay all taxes, penalties, interests and costs represented by the tax sale certificate or duplicate tax sale certificate therefor and thereupon the county treasurer shall execute and deliver a tax deed conveying said property to the district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 520; C.S. 1929, § 30-520; 1941 Comp., § 77-2920; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-20.

### **73-16-22. Special proceedings to enforce collections.**

In the event of any default in the payment of the interest or principal of any bonds issued, and if the said district or its proper officers shall fail or neglect to enforce the payment of any unpaid assessment, the holder of such bonds may, for himself and for the benefit of all others similarly situated, enforce the said liens by suit or action against the land or lands, property or properties, on which such assessment has not been paid, and against the said district; or may apply for the appointment of a receiver to collect the assessment and enforce the liens aforesaid; and the proceeds of such assessments and collections shall be applied, after payment of costs, first to overdue interest, and then to payment pro rata of all bonds issued by the said board which are then due and payable; and the said receiver may be directed by suit to foreclose the lien of said assessments on said property and the suits so brought by the receiver shall be conducted in all matters as suits for the collection of debts and foreclosure of liens under mortgages and trust deeds, and the decrees in such suits and the deeds issued pursuant thereto, shall have the same presumption in their favor; provided, however, that when all such sums have been paid, the receiver shall be discharged, and the affairs of the district conducted by the board as hereinbefore provided.

In any special proceeding commenced under the provisions of this section, the district, and all land and all property or properties on which assessments have not been paid, may be made joint defendants, but separate judgments shall be entered and enforced.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 521; C.S. 1929, § 30-521; 1941 Comp., § 77-2921; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-21.

### **73-16-23. Assessment records prima facie evidence.**

The records of assessments contained in the respective assessments [assessment] records of the district and of the respective counties thereof shall be prima facie evidence in all courts of all matters therein contained.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 522; C.S. 1929, § 30-522; 1941 Comp., § 77-2922; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-22.

### **73-16-24. Remedy for defective assessments.**

If any assessment made under the provisions of this act shall prove invalid, the board shall by subsequent or amended acts or proceedings promptly and without delay remedy all defects or irregularities, as the case may require, by making and providing for the collection of new assessments or otherwise.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 523; C.S. 1929, § 30-523; 1941 Comp., § 77-2923; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-23.

### **73-16-25. Ex-officio district treasurer.**

The county treasurer of the county in which is located any portion of the lands of the district shall be and he is hereby constituted ex-officio district treasurer of the district extending into his county, and the said county treasurer shall be liable upon his official bonds to indictment and criminal prosecution for malfeasance, misfeasance or failure to perform any duty herein prescribed, as county treasurer or ex-officio treasurer, as provided by law in either case as county treasurer.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 524; C.S. 1929, § 30-524; 1941 Comp., § 77-2924; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-24.

### **73-16-26. Bond of county treasurer.**

Before receiving the assessment records, the treasurer of each county into which the district extends, shall furnish a corporate surety company bond, at the expense of the district, executed to the district, in a sum not less than the probable amount to be collected by him for the district during any one year, conditioned that said treasurer shall as hereinbefore provided pay over and account for all assessments so collected by him. Said bond after approval by the board shall be deposited with the clerk who shall produce the same for inspection and use as evidence whenever and wherever lawfully required so to do.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 525; C.S. 1929, § 30-525; 1941 Comp., § 77-2925; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-25.

### **73-16-27. Duty of county treasurer to pay over tax; failure.**

All collections of any assessments made by any county treasurer shall be paid to the treasurer of the proper district, on or before the tenth day of the next succeeding calendar month. If any county treasurer or other person entrusted with the collection of any assessment made under the provisions of this act, refuses, fails or neglects to make prompt payment of the assessments, or any part thereof, collected under this act to the treasurer of the district upon his presentation of a written demand for the board, then he shall pay a penalty of ten (10%) percent on the amount of his delinquency; such penalty shall at once become due and payable and both he and his sureties shall be liable therefor on his bond provided for in this act.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 526; C.S. 1929, § 30-526; 1941 Comp., § 77-2926; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-26.

### **73-16-28. Surplus funds and annual reports.**

A. Any surplus funds in the treasury of the district may be used for retiring bonds, reducing the rate of assessment or for accomplishing any other of the legitimate objects of the district.

B. At least once a year, or oftener if the court shall so order, the board shall make a report to the court of its proceedings and an accounting of receipts and disbursements to that date, which shall be filed with the clerk. Thereupon the court shall order the auditing of said accounts by competent public accountants, who shall file their reports thereon with the clerk, which audit shall be in lieu of and fulfill all purposes of any audit now required by law for any similar political subdivision of the state.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 527; C.S. 1929, § 30-527; 1941 Comp., § 77-2927; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-27.

### **73-16-29. Compensation of officials.**

A. Each member of the board of directors shall receive five (\$5.00) dollars per day and his necessary expenses for the time actually employed in the performance of his duties.

B. Each appraiser shall receive ten (\$10.00) dollars per day and his expenses for the time actually employed in the performance of his duties.

C. Before any duties devolve upon the county treasurers under this act, the board shall consult them and agree upon the salaries for the extra clerical force, if any, required in their respective offices to carry out the requirements of the law by reason of



the establishment of a district, and the said board shall provide for and pay said salaries to said clerk or clerks while engaged on the work of the district, which clerks shall be selected and appointed by each of said county officers for their respective offices. In case of disagreement as to the compensation of such extra clerical force, the matter shall be referred to the court for its determination.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 528; C.S. 1929, § 30-528; 1941 Comp., § 77-2928; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-28.

### **73-16-30. [Conservation and development of resources; assessments authorized.]**

That conservancy districts heretofore or hereafter created under New Mexico statutes be and hereby are authorized to levy an assessment of not to exceed 10% of the special benefits confirmed and approved for the purpose of conserving and developing the resources thereof, servicing outstanding bonds or obligations of such districts and for other purposes under the terms and conditions herein specified.

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2929; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-29.

### **73-16-31. [Conservation and development fund assessment; levy; records; payment.]**

Said special assessment shall be known as the "conservation and development fund assessment"; [it] shall be made by resolution of the board and duly extended on the proper district and tax records in like manner and in accordance with the same procedure as the construction fund assessment under the provisions of the Conservancy Act of New Mexico [73-14-3 NMSA 1978]. A complete record in duplicate shall be kept of the conservation and development fund assessment similar to the records and extension thereof required to be made for the construction fund assessment, and said conservation and development fund assessment may, by sufficient columns provided therefor, be recorded on the same books as the construction fund assessment record, or in such manner as shall be most convenient for the proper recording thereof.

Under the terms of a resolution levying and extending said conservation and development fund assessment, principal payments thereon by the property owners shall commence to be paid within five years from the date thereof, and be apportioned over the remainder of the life of the conservancy bonds theretofore issued, but like opportunity shall be given the property owners to pay said assessment in cash as provided for in the case of the construction fund assessment under the Conservancy Act; and nothing herein contained shall impair the right of said districts in the making of annual levies for construction fund and maintenance fund assessments to levy sufficient amounts as may be necessary to service all of the outstanding obligations of said district, including interest and principal as needed to pay and discharge those

authorized under the provisions hereof, at the time and in the manner prescribed for annual levies under Section 514 [73-16-15 NMSA 1978] of the Conservancy Act.

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2930; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-30.

### **73-16-32. [Conservation and development fund created; legislative finding.]**

In addition to the separate funds provided for under Section 501, Subsection 1 [73-16-1 A NMSA 1978] of Article V of the Conservancy Act [of New Mexico], there is hereby created a separate fund to be known as the "conservation and development fund," by which shall be meant the proceeds of a special levy hereby authorized to be made against the special benefits appraised, equalized and confirmed; and legislative finding is hereby made that for the purpose of conserving and developing the resources of any conservancy district heretofore or hereafter created under the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, the lands and properties therein have and will be benefited by the construction of the official plan and the conserving and developing of the resources thereof to the extent of the benefits confirmed and approved, and that the same have and will be further benefited and improved by conserving and developing the resources thereof in the manner provided hereunder.

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2931; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-31.

### **73-16-33. [Conservancy bonds; conservation and development issue.]**

That conservancy districts heretofore or hereafter organized under the provisions of the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, subsequent to the passage of a resolution authorizing the conservation and development fund assessment, may issue additional bonds to be known as "conservancy bonds - conservation and development issue" which bonds shall be in similar or like form to the bonds provided for under Section 506 [73-16-7 NMSA 1978] of the Conservancy Act, save and except that they shall have printed thereon the following words: "Conservancy Bonds - Conservation and Development Issue," and made otherwise to conform to the provisions of this act [73-16-30 through 73-16-40 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2932; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-32.

### **73-16-34. [Interest rate; sale to governmental agencies without advertisement.]**

The bonds authorized under the provisions hereof shall bear a rate of interest not exceeding 6%, and the same may be sold to the United States government, the reconstruction finance corporation or any federal or state governmental agency without advertisement.

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 77-2933; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-33.

### **73-16-35. [Bonds tax exempt; investment of state funds.]**

The bonds herein authorized shall be entitled to all the privileges of tax exemption and be eligible for the investment of state funds in like manner as provided for conservancy bonds under the provisions of Sections 507 and 508 [73-16-8, 73-16-9 NMSA 1978] of the Conservancy Act [of New Mexico].

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 77-2934; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-34.

### **73-16-36. [Amount of bonds; use of proceeds; exemptions from assessment.]**

Securities authorized to be issued under provisions hereof may be issued in an amount not exceeding 10% of the benefits confirmed and approved in accordance with Articles IV and V of the Conservancy Act [of New Mexico] and the proceeds upon the sale, exchange or delivery thereof shall be devoted to conserving and developing the resources of said conservancy district, the servicing of outstanding obligations thereof or any other expenses and carrying charges of said district, but no property which has paid in full its construction fund assessment prior to the issuance of said securities shall be subject to the conservation and development fund assessment.

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 77-2935; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-35.

### **73-16-37. [Application of other laws.]**

All of the provisions of Article V of the Conservancy Act of New Mexico relating to the manner of filing, extension on district or tax records, issuance, payment, financial administration and other clauses of the Conservancy Act pertaining to the construction fund assessment or the issuance of bonds and the payments therefor and thereon; the duties of public officers in connection therewith; the annual levies therefor and the lien of construction fund assessment shall be applicable to and apply with like force to conservation and development fund assessments save and except the negotiable securities authorized to be sold under the provisions hereof may be disposed of or pledged to the United States government, the reconstruction finance corporation or any federal or other governmental agency without advertisement on sale, pledge or other disposition thereof, and said "conservation and development issue" or bonds shall otherwise be made to conform to the provisions of this act [73-16-30 to 73-16-40 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 8; 1941 Comp., § 77-2936; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-36.

### **73-16-38. [Bonds in serial form; maturity dates.]**

The securities authorized to be issued hereunder shall be serial in form and the entire issue of said conservation and development fund bonds so serially to be issued shall begin to mature within five years after the issuance thereof and a like amount as near as may be of principal and interest shall fall due and mature annually thereafter as in the case of other conservancy bonds, save that the life of the bonds authorized under the terms of this act [73-16-30 to 73-16-40 NMSA 1978] shall be so adjusted serially that all of the principal and interest thereof shall fall due and be payable within the life of the original construction fund bonds.

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 9; 1941 Comp., § 77-2937; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-37.

### **73-16-39. [Bonds considered additional to other bonds; authority to issue; limitations.]**

The bonds authorized to be issued under the terms hereof shall not in any manner impair the original construction fund bond issue, but shall be considered as additional securities authorized to be issued by conservancy districts, and full legislative authority is hereby granted to said districts to sell tax anticipation bonds, refunding bonds, debentures and other negotiable securities, pledging the full faith and credit of such districts, and power is hereby granted to such districts for the levy of special assessments to pay the same, but in no event shall the assessments or outstanding obligations of such districts exceed the amount of the benefits confirmed and approved.

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 10; 1941 Comp., § 77-2938; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-38.

### **73-16-40. [Limited repeal.]**

All provisions of the original Conservancy Act of New Mexico conflicting herewith or limiting the power of conservancy district to issue or sell negotiable securities conforming to the provisions of this act [73-16-30 to 73-16-40 NMSA 1978] are to that extent repealed, but no remaining provisions of said Conservancy Act, otherwise than necessary to conform hereto or affected hereby shall be changed, altered or repealed.

**History:** Laws 1935, ch. 37, § 11; 1941 Comp., § 77-2939; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-39.

### **73-16-41. [Guaranty fund established in districts of 50,000 acres or more.]**

That conservancy districts heretofore or hereafter organized under the Conservancy Act of New Mexico [73-14-3 NMSA 1978], be and they hereby are authorized and directed, in addition to the separate funds now provided for, to establish in the manner hereinafter set forth a "guaranty fund" for the purpose of guaranteeing the prompt payment of the principal of and the interest upon all conservancy bonds heretofore issued or hereafter to be issued as the same may severally mature.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 50, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2940; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-40.

### **73-16-42. [Tax levy for guaranty fund.]**

That for the establishment and maintenance of such guaranty fund, the board of commissioners or directors of any such district be and they hereby are authorized and directed annually to levy a tax, in addition to all other taxes, upon the real property within such district subject to general taxation for state and county purposes, of two mills for every dollar of the assessed valuation thereof, as shown by the last preceding assessment for state and county taxes; provided, however, that whenever and so long as the amount of such guaranty fund equals or exceeds an amount equal to fifteen per centum of the total bonded indebtedness of such district, no further levy shall be made therefor, unless and until the amount of such fund may be depleted by payments therefrom as hereinafter authorized.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 50, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2941; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-41.

### **73-16-43. [Levy and collection of tax for guaranty fund.]**

The tax for such guaranty fund shall be levied by resolution of the board; shall be known as the guaranty fund levy; and the amount of such levy upon the property subject thereto shall be certified and extended as in the case of other levies for state and county taxes. Said amount shall be collected for the use of such district as herein provided at the same time and in the same manner as taxes for state and county purposes, and the revenue laws of the state of New Mexico for the levy and collection of taxes for state and county purposes, including the enforcement of penalties and forfeiture for delinquent taxes, shall be applicable to the levy and collection of the amount of taxes certified by the board of such district for the guaranty fund as aforesaid. All collections made by the county treasurers pursuant to such levy shall be paid over to the district within the time and in the same manner as other district funds, and the county treasurers shall be liable on their official bonds and subject to the same penalties for failure so to collect and pay over such taxes, as in the case of other conservancy funds.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 50, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2942; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-42.

### **73-16-44. [Disposition of guaranty fund.]**

The entire proceeds from such guaranty fund levy shall be deposited by the treasurer of such conservancy district in a separate fund to be known as the guaranty fund, and so long as any bonded indebtedness of such district remains outstanding and unpaid, the guaranty fund may be used only to pay the principal of and interest upon the bonded indebtedness of the district as the same shall mature, and then only when and if the district does not have on hand other funds available for such purposes.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 50, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2943; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-43.

### **73-16-45. [Investment of guaranty fund.]**

The treasurer of any such district shall, when directed by resolution of the board, invest such guaranty fund, and the income thereof, in the United States government bonds or municipal bonds approved for savings bank investment in the states of New York and Massachusetts, so that the same may always be readily convertible into cash if and when needed for the purposes in this act [73-16-41 to 73-16-49 NMSA 1978] provided.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 50, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 77-2944; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-44.

### **73-16-46. [Transfers from guaranty fund to other funds.]**

If and when the bonded indebtedness of any such district has been paid and retired, and such guaranty fund is no longer needed for the purposes herein provided, such moneys, or any unexpended portion thereof, shall be placed in the construction or such other fund of the district as may be ordered by the board thereof.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 50, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 77-2945; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-45.

### **73-16-47. [Other assessments unaffected.]**

The provisions of this act [73-16-41 to 73-16-49 NMSA 1978] shall not invalidate the levy of any assessments or the apportionment of any benefits heretofore made in conservancy districts, nor shall the power to levy additional assessments in the manner provided in the Conservancy Act be affected hereby.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 50, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 77-2946; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-46.

### **73-16-48. [Limitation on use of fund.]**

No revenues collected from the ad valorem tax authorized herein shall be used for the payment of any interest or principal on bonds hereafter sold under any option existing at the time of the passage of this act [73-16-41 to 73-16-49 NMSA 1978] for the purchase of bonds of any conservancy district.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 50, § 8; 1941 Comp., § 77-2947; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-47.

### **73-16-49. [Application of Guaranty Fund Act.]**

The provisions of this act [73-16-41 to 73-16-49 NMSA 1978] shall apply only to conservancy districts containing 50,000 acres or more.

**History:** Laws 1931, ch. 50, § 13; 1941 Comp., § 77-2948; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-48.

### **73-16-50. Refunding bonds; form; registration.**

Any conservancy district now organized and operating under the provisions of the Conservancy Act of New Mexico is authorized, whenever the board of directors of the district determines that it is for the best interests of the district and the taxpayers of the district, to refund the bonds of the district of every character at any time outstanding, including bonds issued hereunder, by the issue of new bonds of the district in such amount, in such form, designation and denomination and with such maturities and provisions for their payment and conditions for their retirement and calling and bearing such rate or rates of interest as the board may, by resolution, prescribe. Such bonds, except for bonds issued in book entry or similar form without the delivery of physical securities, shall be executed in the name and on behalf of the district and signed by the president of the board, with the seal of the district affixed thereto, and attested by the signature of the secretary. Installments of interest may be evidenced by coupons bearing the facsimile signature of the district treasurer. In case any officer whose signature or certificate appears upon bonds or coupons issued pursuant to Sections 73-16-50 through 73-16-53 NMSA 1978 ceases to be an officer before the delivery of the bonds, such signature or certificate shall nevertheless be valid and sufficient for all purposes the same as if he had remained in office until the delivery of the bonds. The coupon bonds may be registered either as to principal or interest or both, at the option of the holder, at the office of the district.

**History:** Laws 1941, ch. 108, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-2949; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-49; Laws 1983, ch. 265, § 60.

### **73-16-51. [Exchange or sale of bonds; incontestability.]**

Such new bonds, when executed, shall be held by the treasurer of the district subject to the orders of the board of directors of the district. Such new bonds may be issued in exchange for the bonds refunded, or may be sold at public or private sale and the proceeds thereof used to acquire for retirement the bonds refunded. Such new bonds shall be incontestable in the hands of bona fide purchasers or holders thereof for value. No proceedings in respect to the issuance of any such bonds shall be necessary except such as are required by this act [73-16-50 to 73-16-53 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 1941, ch. 108, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-2950; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-50.

### **73-16-52. [Bonds tax exempt; investment of state funds.]**

Bonds issued under this act [73-16-50 to 73-16-53 NMSA 1978] shall be exempt from all state, county, municipal, school and other taxes imposed by any taxing authority of the state of New Mexico, and shall be considered as such interest-bearing securities as the permanent funds of the state of New Mexico may be invested in, as provided by law.

**History:** Laws 1941, ch. 108, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-2951; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-51.

### **73-16-53. [Rank of bonds; security.]**

Bonds issued under this act [73-16-50 to 73-16-53 NMSA 1978] shall rank on a parity with all other bonds of the issue or issues refunded in part thereby and shall in all respects be deemed substituted for the particular bonds refunded thereby and entitled to the same security and payable from the same funds as the bonds so refunded. For the payment of the new bonds the district shall be required to levy and collect the same assessments, taxes and charges as it would have been required to do for the payment of the bonds refunded.

**History:** Laws 1941, ch. 108, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-2952; 1953 Comp., § 75-30-52.

## **ARTICLE 17**

### **Conservancy Districts; General Provisions**

#### **73-17-1. Lands in more than one district.**

A. The same land may be included in more than one district and be subject to the provisions of this act for each and every district in which it may be included, provided that no district shall be organized in whole or in part within the territory of a district already organized, until the court having jurisdiction of the original district shall determine, upon application, whether the purposes of this act will best be accomplished by the organization of an additional district, or whether the conditions demand that the territory proposed to be organized into an additional district shall be organized as part of the existing district. Such application shall fulfill all the requirements of a petition for a district as set forth in Section 202 [73-14-5 NMSA 1978].

B. Upon such application being made, if the court shall determine that the organization of such territory as a part of the original district should not be ordered, then proceedings may be had before any court of competent jurisdiction for the formation of an additional district.

C. Any person whose signature has been subscribed to said application may within ten (10) days after such decision withdraw his signature therefrom, and if at the expiration of said period there remain sufficient subscribers to said petition to satisfy the requirements of Section 202, and in case the court shall determine that the territory described in such application, if organized for the purpose of a district, should be included within the original district, like proceedings shall thereupon be had with respect to the territory and the owners thereof as in the case of a petition for the formation of a district. Upon the hearing so had, if it shall appear that the purpose of this act would be subserved by the organization of such territory as part of the original district, the court shall enter an order accordingly.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 601; C.S. 1929, § 30-601; 1941 Comp., § 77-3001; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-1.



## **73-17-2. Union of districts.**

A. In case two or more districts have been organized in a territory which, in the opinion of the board of each of the districts, should constitute but one district, the boards of the districts may petition the court for an order uniting said districts into a single district; provided, however, if such districts are contiguous, such petition may be signed and presented by the board of any one of such contiguous districts. Such petition shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the district court in and for that county which has the greatest valuation of property within the districts sought to be included, as shown by the tax rolls of the respective counties. Said petition shall set forth facts showing that the purposes of this act would be subserved by the union of said districts, and that such union would promote the economical execution of the purposes for which the districts were organized.

B. Upon the filing of said petition the court shall by order fix a time and place of hearing; and thereupon the clerk shall give notice by publication or by personal service to the board or boards of the district or districts which it is desired to unite with the district of the petitioners, which notice shall contain the time and the place of the hearing and the purpose of the same.

C. Upon the hearing, should the court find that the averments of the petition are true and that the said districts, or any of them, should be united, it shall so order, and thereafter such districts shall be united into one district and proceed as such. The court shall designate the corporate name of such united district, and such further proceedings shall be taken as provided for in this act. The court shall in such order appoint the directors of such united district, who shall thereafter have such powers and be subject to such regulations as are provided for directors in districts created in the first instance.

D. All legal proceedings already instituted by or against any of such constituent districts may be revived and continued against such united district by an order of the court substituting the name of such united district for such constituent districts, and such proceedings shall then continue accordingly.

E. Instead of organizing a new district from such constituent districts, the court may, in its discretion, direct that one or more of such districts described in the petition be included in another of said districts, which other shall continue under its original corporate name and organization; or it may direct that the district or districts so absorbed shall be represented on the board of directors of the original district, designating what members of the board of directors of the original district shall be retired from the new board, and what members representing the included district or districts shall take their places; or it may direct that the included district or districts shall become subdistricts of the main district.

F. In case the districts sought to be united were organized in different judicial districts, then the court to determine the question involved shall consist of one judge from each of the judicial districts in which each of the districts was organized, and a

majority shall be necessary to render a decision. From such a decision, or from a failure to decide, any interested property owner may appeal to the district court of the county in which a district was organized having the largest assessed valuation. No action under the provisions of this section shall operate to interrupt or delay any proceeding under this act until the questions involved are finally determined.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 602; C.S. 1929, § 30-602; 1941 Comp., § 77-3002; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-2.

### **73-17-3. Subdistricts.**

A. Whenever it is desired to construct improvements wholly within or partly within and partly without any district organized under this act, which improvements will affect only a part of said district, for the purpose of accomplishing such work, subdistricts may be organized upon petition of the owners of property, which petition shall fulfill the same requirements concerning the subdistricts as the petition outlined in Section 202 [73-14-5 NMSA 1978] of this act is required to fulfill concerning the organization of the main district, and shall be filed with the clerk of the district court and shall be accompanied by a bond as provided for in Section 203 [73-14-6 NMSA 1978] of this act. All proceedings relating to the organization of such subdistricts shall conform in all things to the provisions of this act relating to the organization of districts.

B. Whenever the court shall by its order duly entered of record, declare and decree such subdistricts to be organized, the clerk of the said court shall thereupon give notice of such order to the board of the district, who shall thereupon act also as the board of directors of the subdistrict.

C. Thereafter, the proceedings in reference to the subdistrict shall in all matters conform to the provisions of this act, except that in the appraisal of benefits and damages for the purposes of such subdistricts, in the issuance of bonds, in the levying of assessments and in all other matters affecting only the subdistrict, the provisions of this act shall apply to the subdistrict as though it were an independent district, and it shall not, in these things, be amalgamated with the main district.

D. The board of directors, board of appraisers, chief engineer, attorney, secretary and other officers, agents and employees [employees] of the district shall, so far as it may be necessary, serve in the same capacity for such subdistrict, and contracts and agreements between the main district and subdistrict may be made in the same manner as contracts and agreements between two districts. The distribution of administration expense between the main district and subdistrict shall be in proportion to the interests involved, and the amount of service rendered, such division to be made by the board with the right of appeal to the court establishing the district.

E. This section shall not be held to prevent the organization of independent districts for local improvements under other laws within the limits of a district organized under this act.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 603; C.S. 1929, § 30-603; 1941 Comp., § 77-3003; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-3.

#### **73-17-4. District protection.**

The board shall have the right to police and protect the works of the district, to prevent persons, vehicles or livestock from passing over the works of the district and prevent the doing of any act which would result in damage thereto.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 701; C.S. 1929, § 30-701; 1941 Comp., § 77-3004; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-4.

#### **73-17-5. Prohibition of injury to survey marks [; field notes are district property]**

The wilful destruction, injury or removal of any bench marks, witness marks, stakes or other reference marks, placed by the surveyors or engineers or by contractors in constructing the works of the district, shall be a misdemeanor, punishable by fine not exceeding one hundred (\$100) dollars. The original field notes of surveys shall be the permanent property of the district.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 702; C.S. 1929, § 30-702; 1941 Comp., § 77-3005; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-5.

#### **73-17-6. Liability for damages.**

A. All persons and public corporations, shall be liable for damages done to works of the district by themselves, their agents, their employes [employees] or by their livestock. Any person guilty of wilful damage shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be fined not to exceed two hundred (\$200) dollars and costs and shall be liable for all damages and costs. The board shall have authority to repair such damage at the expense of the person or public corporation causing the same.

B. In all cases declared misdemeanors by this act, any justice of the peace [magistrate] of the county in which the offense is committed shall have jurisdiction thereof, and upon complaint being made as is now required by law, may issue a warrant directed to any proper officer of his county, for the arrest of any person so charged with any such misdemeanor, and upon the arrest of such person, the justice of the peace [magistrate] before whom such person is brought for trial shall hear and determine the cause, and if he finds the accused guilty, shall assess the fine as prescribed in this act.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 703; C.S. 1929, § 30-703; 1941 Comp., § 77-3006; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-6.

#### **73-17-7. Penalty for fraud.**

The making of profit, directly or indirectly, by any officer of any district, or by any other public officer within the state, out of any contracts entered into by the district, or the use of any money belonging to the district by loaning it or otherwise using it, or by depositing the same in any manner contrary to law or by removal of any money by any such officer or by his consent, and placing it elsewhere than is prescribed, either by law or by the official acts of the board, for the purpose of profit, shall constitute a felony, and on conviction thereof shall subject such officer to imprisonment in the state penitentiary for a term not exceeding two years, or a fine not exceeding five thousand (\$5,000) dollars or both fine and imprisonment, and the officer offending shall be liable personally and upon his official bond for all losses to such district, and for all profits realized by such unlawful use of monies.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 704; C.S. 1929, § 30-704; 1941 Comp., § 77-3007; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-7.

### **73-17-8. Removal of officials for cause.**

Any director or other officer of any district organized under this act may be removed for cause after a hearing upon a motion filed by any interested person in the original proceeding in which the district was organized.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 705; C.S. 1929, § 30-705; 1941 Comp., § 77-3008; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-8.

### **73-17-9. Remedy by mandamus.**

The performance of all duties prescribed in this act concerning the organization and administration or operation of a district may be enforced against any officer thereof or against any person or public corporation refusing to comply with any order of the board, by mandamus, at the instance of the said board or of any person or public corporation interested in any way in such district or proposed district. Such proceedings shall be instituted in the district court having jurisdiction of the original case.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 706; C.S. 1929, § 30-706; 1941 Comp., § 77-3009; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-9.

### **73-17-10. Cooperation with United States government or other agencies.**

The board shall have the right and authority to enter into contracts or other arrangements with the United States government or any department thereof; or with the state government of this or other states; or with irrigation, drainage, conservation, conservancy or other improvement districts, in this or other states; or with persons, or public corporations; for cooperation or assistance in making surveys or investigations and reports thereon; in constructing, maintaining, using and operating works of the

district, in acquiring, purchasing, extending, operating or maintaining constructed works; water supplies, water systems, irrigation or drainage works, dam and reservoir sites; in building dams to impound flood waters; in conserving and using the said waters for irrigation or other purposes, including the development of hydroelectric energy; in purchasing, leasing or acquiring land or property in adjoining states in order to secure outlets and other needs of the district; and in any other manner furthering the purposes and incidental purposes of districts.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 801; C.S. 1929, § 30-801; 1941 Comp., § 77-3010; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-10.

### **73-17-11. Board to secure cooperation.**

Whenever lands owned by the federal government or over which it has jurisdiction or control, shall be included in any district, the board shall immediately upon its appointment, proceed to make all necessary arrangements with the proper department or agency of the government for cooperating in making the contemplated improvements to the end that the said lands may properly remain within the district, and may be charged with and bear their just share of the costs of the improvements.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 802; C.S. 1929, § 30-802; 1941 Comp., § 77-3011; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-11.

### **73-17-12. Interference with state and federal rights.**

Should the contemplated improvements by any district interfere with any right or property of the federal government or any state government and it becomes necessary to obtain permission and consent of such governments or any of the departments or agents thereof, to carry out such improvements, the board shall enter into any compact, agreement or contract to obtain the necessary permission and consent for the purpose of making the improvements contemplated; provided, however, the failure of the board to obtain such permission and consent for the district shall not be taken advantage of by any property owner in any proceeding against the district and such failure shall only be questioned by such governments as shall have their rights interfered with.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 803; C.S. 1929, § 30-803; 1941 Comp., § 77-3012; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-12.

### **73-17-13. Federal [or state] appropriations.**

The board shall by proper action obtain the money or the use thereof, of any fund created by any federal or state appropriations heretofore or hereafter to be made, to which the district may be entitled for discharging, fulfilling and accomplishing the objects and purposes for which such appropriations were made.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 804; C.S. 1929, § 30-804; 1941 Comp., § 77-3013; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-13.

### **73-17-14. State lands.**

A. Whenever there shall be included in any district public lands belonging to the state of New Mexico subject to entry or which have been entered, and for which no certificates of purchase have been issued, such lands are hereby made and declared to be subject to all of the provisions of this act to the same extent and in the same manner in which the lands of a like character held under private ownership are or may be subject.

B. All notices required to be given under this act shall, as soon as such notices are issued, be served upon the commissioner of public lands of the state of New Mexico by mailing to his office a copy thereof, enclosed in a sealed envelope, with postage prepaid.

C. On all books and records of the district, the words "state lands" shall be used in the places therein provided for the name of the owner of lands, but in all other respects the said books and records shall be kept as though the described lands were privately owned.

D. Upon the confirmation of any assessment against lands of the state, that portion of the records relating to state lands, properly signed by the president and with the seal of the district thereunto affixed and attested by the signature of the secretary, shall be delivered by the secretary to the commissioner of public lands. It shall be the duty of the commissioner of public lands to receive the same as a record of the assessment of the said district against the said lands and the said record shall be the authority of the commissioner of public lands to demand and receive the assessments due the district as found in the same.

E. The commissioner of public lands shall enter on the books of his office, against each description of such state lands, the amounts of assessments thereon, and shall certify the same to the secretary of finance and administration, who shall draw a warrant on the state treasurer therefor, to be paid out of any funds in his hands not otherwise appropriated. Such warrant shall be forwarded by the secretary of finance and administration to the treasurer, and shall by him be applied in payment of such assessments and by him be credited to the proper funds of the district. No patent shall issue for such lands until the amount of all such assessments with interest at seven percent has been paid. No public lands which were unentered at the time any assessment was levied against the same by any district shall be sold for such assessment.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 805; C.S. 1929, § 30-805; 1941 Comp., § 77-3014; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-14; Laws 1977, ch. 247, § 200.

### **73-17-15. Correction of faulty notices.**

A. In any and every case where a notice is provided for in this act, if the court finds for any reason that due notice was not given, the court shall not thereby lose jurisdiction, and the proceeding in question shall not thereby be void or be abated, but the court shall in that case order due notice to be given, and shall continue the hearing until such time as notice shall be properly given and thereupon shall proceed as though notice had been properly given in the first instance.

B. In case any particular appraisal or appraisals, assessment or assessments, levy or levies, shall be held void for want of legal notice, or in case the board shall determine that any notice with reference to any land or lands may be faulty, then the board may file a motion in the original cause asking that the court order notice to be given to the owner of such land or lands, and the court shall set a time for hearing as provided in this act. And in case the original notice as a whole shall be held to be sufficient, but faulty only with reference to publication as to certain particular lands, in such case only the owners of and persons interested in such particular lands need be notified by such subsequent notice, and if the publication of any notice in any court shall be held to be defective or not made in time, publication of the defective notice need be had only in the county in which the defect occurred.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 901; C.S. 1929, § 30-901; 1941 Comp., § 77-3015; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-15.

### **73-17-16. Early hearings.**

All cases in which there may arise a question of the validity of the organization of a conservancy district, or a question of the validity of any proceedings under this act, shall be advanced as a matter of immediate public interest and concern, and heard in all courts at the earliest practicable moment. The courts shall be open at all times for the purposes of this act.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 902; C.S. 1929, § 30-902; 1941 Comp., § 77-3016; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-16.

### **73-17-17. Appeals shall not delay proceedings.**

A. No appeal under this act shall be permitted to interrupt or delay any action or the prosecution of any work, except where the appellant is entitled to a jury trial under the constitution of the state, in which case, only so much of the work shall be interrupted or delayed as would constitute a taking or damaging of the property of such appellant.

B. The right of appeal from orders and decrees of said court shall exist as in civil cases, except no proceeding to review an order or decree of the court, entered under the provisions of this act, shall be commenced after thirty (30) days from the entry of the order or decree sought to be reviewed.

C. The board shall have the same right as property owners to invoke the jurisdiction of the supreme court of the state of New Mexico to review any reviewable order or decree of the court made in any proceeding.

D. The failure to appeal from or seek a review of any order or decree of the court in any proceedings, within the time specified herein, shall constitute a waiver of any irregularity in the proceedings, and the remedies provided herein shall exclude all other remedies except as herein provided.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 903; C.S. 1929, § 30-903; 1941 Comp., § 77-3017; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-17.

### **73-17-18. Remedy for injury by a district.**

In case any person or public corporation, within or without any district organized under this act, may be injuriously affected [affected] with respect to property rights in any manner whatsoever by any act performed by any official or agent of such district, or by the execution, maintenance or operation of the official plan, and in case no other method of relief is offered under this act, the remedy shall be as follows:

A. the person or public corporation seeking relief shall petition the court before which said district was organized for an appraisal of damages sufficient to compensate for such injuries;

B. the court shall thereupon direct the board of appraisers of the district to appraise said damages and injuries, and to make a report to the court on or before the time named in the order of the court;

C. upon the filing of such report, the court shall cause notice to be given to the petitioner and to the board of the district, of a hearing on said report. At the time of such hearing, the court shall consider said report of the appraisers, and may ratify said report or amend it as the court may deem equitable, or, may return it to the said appraisers and require them to prepare a new report;

D. upon the filing of an order of the court approving said report of the appraisers, with such modifications as it may have made, said order shall constitute a final adjudication of the matter, unless it shall be appealed from in the manner hereinafter provided, within twenty (20) days;

E. appeal from said order to a jury may be had as hereinbefore provided in case of condemnation proceedings, by the petitioners, by the board of the district or by any person or public corporation adversely affected by the report of the board of appraisers;

F. no damages shall be allowed under this section which would not otherwise be allowed in law; provided, however, that nothing in this section shall be construed to



deprive any person or public corporation of the remedy of injunction in the case of prospective irreparable injury.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 904; C.S. 1929, § 30-904; 1941 Comp., § 77-3018; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-18.

### **73-17-19. Short forms and abbreviations.**

A. In any order of the court the words "the court now here finds that it hath jurisdiction of the parties to and of the subject matter of this proceeding," shall be equivalent to a finding of existence of each jurisdictional fact necessary to confer plenary jurisdiction upon the court and necessary from the proper signing and filing of the initial petitions to the date of the order to meet every legal requirement imposed by this act.

B. No other or further evidence of the legal hypothecation of the proceeds of any special assessment levied hereunder, for the payment of bonds or warrants issued pursuant to this act shall be required than the passage of a resolution by the board of directors and the issuance of bonds or warrants in accordance therewith.

C. In the preparation of any assessment or appraisal record the usual abbreviations employed by engineers, surveyors and abstracters may be used.

D. Where properly to describe any parcel of land, it would be necessary to use a long description, the appraisers after locating the land generally, may refer to the book and page of the public record of any instrument in which the land is described, or they may utilize plat numbers or other designations that may be established by the chief engineer in district surveys, copies of which surveys shall be received and filed in the office of the county clerk in the county or counties in which the lands are situated, which reference shall be sufficient for all the purposes of this act to identify the land described in the records so referred to.

E. It shall not be necessary, in any notice required to be published by this act, to specify the names of the owners of the lands or property of the persons interested therein; but any such notice may be addressed "To All Persons and Public Corporations Interested" with like effect as though such notice named by name every owner of any lands or property within the territory specified in the notice and every person interested therein and every lienor, actual or inchoate.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 905; C.S. 1929, § 30-905; 1941 Comp., § 77-3019; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-19.

### **73-17-20. Liberal construction.**

This act being necessary to secure and preserve the public health, safety, convenience and welfare, and being necessary for the prevention of great loss of life,

and for the security of public and private property from floods and other uncontrolled waters, it shall be liberally construed to effect the purposes of this act.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 906; C.S. 1929, § 30-906; 1941 Comp., § 77-3020; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-20.

### **73-17-21. Prescription and adverse possession.**

The rights of the district to the waters of the district, or the use thereof, or the land within the district and property owned by it shall not be lost by the district by prescription or by adverse possession, or for nonuse of the waters.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 908; C.S. 1929, § 30-908; 1941 Comp., § 77-3021; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-21.

### **73-17-22. Property, title, tax exempt.**

Title to all rights and property acquired by any district, shall immediately and by operation of law, vest in such district in its corporate name; such property shall be held for the uses and purposes of the district, and shall be exempt from all taxation.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 909; C.S. 1929, § 30-909; 1941 Comp., § 77-3022; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-22.

### **73-17-23. Saving clause and repeals.**

A. The purposes and powers herein contained and provided for are hereby granted to and conferred upon conservancy districts heretofore organized under the provisions of Chapter 140 of the Laws of New Mexico of 1923 and all the provisions hereof shall be held applicable in the manner herein prescribed, to such conservancy districts heretofore organized under said Chapter 140 of the Laws of New Mexico of 1923 and all acts and proceedings done or had, and obligations incurred by any such conservancy district or its directors or officers under and pursuant to the provisions of the aforesaid act are hereby ratified and confirmed.

B. Chapter 140 of the Laws of New Mexico of 1923, entitled "An act to provide for the organization of conservancy districts for the purpose of cooperating with the government of the United States under the terms of the federal reclamation law and other federal laws, and to define the purposes and powers thereof," is hereby repealed; but such repeal shall not invalidate any act or proceeding theretofore done under said act; provided, however, that the continuity and status of any district organized under the provisions of said Chapter 140 of the Laws of New Mexico of 1923, shall be unaffected by the repeal of said Chapter 140, and such district shall, after this act is in full force and effect, continue to exist under and be governed by the provisions of this act.

C. All other acts or parts of acts conflicting in any way with any of the provisions of this act, in regard to improvements of the character contemplated by this act, or regulating or limiting the power of taxation or assessment or otherwise interfering with the execution of this act according to its terms, are hereby declared inoperative and ineffective as to this act, as completely as if they did not exist, but all such acts and parts of acts shall not in any way be otherwise affected by this act.

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 910; C.S. 1929, § 30-910; 1941 Comp., § 77-3023; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-23.

## **73-17-24. Forms.**

The following forms illustrate the character of the procedure contemplated by this act; and if substantially complied with (with changes to meet particular requirements), shall be held to meet the requirements of this act.

### **FORM I**

In the district court of the \_\_\_\_\_ judicial district of the state of New Mexico.

In the matter of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district.

### **NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION**

To all persons and public corporations interested:

Public notice is hereby given:

1. That on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, pursuant to the provisions of the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, there was filed in the office of the clerk of the district court sitting in and for \_\_\_\_\_ county, New Mexico, the petition of \_\_\_\_\_ and others for the establishment of a conservancy district to be known as \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district.

(Here insert the purpose.)

2. That the lands sought to be included in said district comprise lands in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ counties, New Mexico, described substantially as follows:

(Here insert description.)

3. That a public hearing on said petition will be had in said court on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, at the hour of o'clock \_\_\_\_m., by the district court sitting in and for \_\_\_\_\_ county, at the courthouse in the city \_\_\_\_\_ county of \_\_\_\_\_, New Mexico.

All persons and public corporations owning or interested in real estate and other property within the territory hereinbefore described will be given the opportunity to be heard at the time and place above specified.

Dated at \_\_\_\_\_, New Mexico, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the district court of the

\_\_\_\_\_  
judicial district of the state of New Mexico, within and for the county  
of \_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy.

## FORM II

### FINDING ON HEARING

In the district court sitting in and for \_\_\_\_\_ county, New Mexico.

In the matter of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district:

### FINDINGS AND DECREE ON HEARING

On this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, this cause coming on for hearing upon the petition of \_\_\_\_\_ and others, for the organization of a conservancy district under the Conservancy Act of the state of New Mexico, the court after a full hearing, now here finds:

1. That said petition had been signed and presented in full conformity with the Conservancy Act of New Mexico.
2. That the allegations of said petition are true.
3. That no protesting petition has been filed (or if filed has been dismissed).
4. That this court had jurisdiction of the parties to, and the subject matter of, this proceeding.
5. That the purposes for which said district is established are:

(Insert the purposes, e.g., a system of flood prevention.)

6. That the public safety, health, convenience and welfare will be promoted by the organization of a conservancy district substantially as prayed in said petition; and that a public necessity exists for the construction of the proposed work.

7. That the territory to be included in the proposed district and the boundaries of said district are as follows:

(Here insert boundaries of district.)

8. That the said territory last above described should be constituted and created a conservancy district under the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, under the corporate name of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district.

Wherefore, it is by the court ordered, adjudged and decreed:

That the territory as above described be and the same hereby is constituted and created a conservancy district under the Conservancy Act of New Mexico under the corporate name of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district, with its office or principal place of business at \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ county, New Mexico. (If directors are appointed at the same time.) The following persons are hereby appointed directors of said conservancy district: \_\_\_\_\_ for the term of six years, \_\_\_\_\_ for the term of six years, \_\_\_\_\_ for the term of six years, \_\_\_\_\_ for the term of six years, who are hereby directed to qualify and proceed according to law.

9. For consideration of other matters herein, this cause is retained on the docket of this court.

Dated at \_\_\_\_\_, New Mexico, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_, Judge.

### FORM III

### NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS TO PAY ASSESSMENTS

\_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district

To all persons and public corporations interested:

Public notice is hereby given:

1. That on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, the board of directors of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district duly levied for the amount of the construction fund of said district, an assessment upon all the property in said district in the aggregate

sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars, (\$ \_\_\_\_), and has caused the same to be extended upon the construction fund assessment record of said district, and that said record is now in the hands of the treasurer of the said district for collection.

2. That the entire assessment against any parcel of land or other property may be paid to the said treasurer of the district at any time on or prior to \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, without costs and without interest.

3. That as soon after the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, as conveniently may be, the board of directors of said district will divide the uncollected portion of said assessment into convenient installments and will issue bonds bearing interest not exceeding six percent per annum in anticipation of the collection of the several installments of said assessment, pursuant to the Conservancy Act of New Mexico.

Dated at \_\_\_\_\_, New Mexico, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President.

(SEAL)

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary.

#### FORM IV

#### BONDS AND COUPONS

(Form of bond)

No. \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

United States of America, state of New Mexico.

\_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district.

#### CONSERVANCY BOND

Know all men by these presents, that \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district, a legally organized conservancy district of the state of New Mexico, acknowledges itself to owe and for value received, hereby promises to pay to the bearer \_\_\_\_\_ dollars, on the first day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, with interest thereon from the date hereof until paid at the rate of \_\_\_\_\_ percent per annum, payable \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, and semiannually thereafter on the first day of \_\_\_\_\_, and of \_\_\_\_\_ in

each year on presentation and surrender of the annexed interest coupons as they severally become due. Both the principal of and the interest on this bond are hereby made payable in lawful money of the United States of America at \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

This bond is one of a series of bonds issued by \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district for the purpose of paying the cost of constructing a system for flood prevention (or for other words [works]) for said district, and in anticipation of the collection of the several installments of an assessment duly levied upon lands and other property within said district and benefited by said improvement in strict compliance with the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, and pursuant to an order of the board of directors of said district, duly made and entered of record.

And it is hereby certified and recited that all acts, conditions and things required to be done in locating and establishing said district and in equalizing appraisals of benefits and in levying assessments against lands benefited thereby, and in authorizing, executing and issuing this bond, have been legally had, done and performed in due form of law; that the total amount of bonds issued by said district does not exceed ninety (90) percent of the assessments so levied and unpaid at the time said bonds are issued, and does not exceed any legal limitation imposed by law.

And for the performance of all the covenants and stipulations of this bond and of the duties imposed by law upon said district for the collection of the principal of and the interest upon said assessment and the application thereof to the payment of this bond and the interest thereon, and for the levying of such other and further assessments as are authorized by law and as may be required for the prompt payment of this bond and the interest thereon, the full faith, credit and resources of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district are hereby irrevocably pledged.

In testimony whereof, the board of directors of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district has caused this bond to be signed by its president and sealed with the corporate seal of said district, attested by its secretary, and has caused the coupons hereto annexed to be executed by the facsimile signature of its treasurer as of the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President.

(SEAL)

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

FORM V

In the district court of the \_\_\_\_\_ judicial district of the state of New Mexico.

In the matter of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district.

### NOTICE OF ENLARGEMENT OF DISTRICT

To all persons and public corporations interested:

Public notice is hereby given:

1. That heretofore on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, the district court sitting in and for \_\_\_\_\_ county, New Mexico, duly entered a final order and decree constituting and creating \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district and appointing a board of directors therefor.

2. That thereafter this court duly appointed

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

to be the board of appraisers, for said district. That said \_\_\_\_\_ board of appraisers, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, filed its report recommending that the following lands and other property not originally included in the district be added thereto. (Here describe generally the lands which the report of the board of appraisers recommends should be added to the district.)

3. That on \_\_\_\_\_, the day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, (or soon thereafter as the convenience of the court will permit), at the courthouse in the city of \_\_\_\_\_ county of \_\_\_\_\_, New Mexico, the district court sitting in and for \_\_\_\_\_ county, New Mexico, will hear all persons and public corporations who are owners of or interested in the property described in this notice upon the question whether said lands should be added to and included in said \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district.

Dated at \_\_\_\_\_, New Mexico, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the district court of the

\_\_\_\_\_  
judicial district of the state of New Mexico, within and for the county of \_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy.

FORM VI

STATE OF NEW MEXICO



\_\_\_\_\_ CONSERVANCY DISTRICT  
CONSERVANCY APPRAISAL RECORD

\_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY

FORM VII

In the district court of the \_\_\_\_\_ judicial district of the state of New Mexico.

In the matter of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district.

NOTICE OF HEARINGS ON APPRAISALS

To all persons and public corporations interested:

Public notice is hereby given:

1. That heretofore on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, the district court sitting in and for \_\_\_\_\_ county, New Mexico, duly entered an order and decree, constituting and creating \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district, and appointing a board of directors therefor.

2. That thereafter this court duly appointed

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

the board of appraisers for said district. That said board of appraisers on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, filed its appraisal of benefits and damages. The land and other property affected by such appraisal is described as follows:

(Here insert general description of land appraised.)

(It will be sufficient to state: "all land lying in the \_\_\_\_\_ ward of the city of \_\_\_\_\_," or "all land abutting on \_\_\_\_\_ street in the city of \_\_\_\_\_," or "all land lying west of \_\_\_\_\_ river and east of \_\_\_\_\_ railroad in section \_\_\_\_\_, township \_\_\_\_\_ range \_\_\_\_\_," or any general description pointing out the lands involved.)

The said appraisal of benefits and damages and of land to be taken is now on file in the office of the clerk of this court.

3. All public corporations and all persons, owners of or interested in the property described in said report, whether as benefited property or as property taken or damaged

(whether said taken or damaged property lies within or without said district), desiring to contest the appraisals as made and returned by the board of appraisers, must file their objections in said court on or before the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, and a hearing on said appraisal will be held in this court on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, at the hour of \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock, \_\_\_\_m., at the courthouse in the city of \_\_\_\_\_, county of \_\_\_\_\_, New Mexico, at which time an opportunity will be afforded all objectors to be heard upon their several objections.

Dated at \_\_\_\_\_, New Mexico, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the district court of the

\_\_\_\_\_  
judicial district of the state of New Mexico, within and for the county of \_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy.

#### FORM VIII

#### CERTIFICATE OF LEVY OF ASSESSMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION

#### FUND ASSESSMENT RECORD.

State of New Mexico, county of \_\_\_\_\_

To the assessor of \_\_\_\_\_ county, New Mexico.

This is to certify that by virtue and under the authority of the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, the board of directors of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district has levied the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars (\$ \_\_\_\_\_), for the account of the construction fund of said district, which said assessment bears interest as provided by law and is payable as set forth in the construction fund assessment record to which this certificate is appended.

The assessments above specified shall be assessed, collectible and payable in the sums therein specified at the time that the state and county taxes are due and collectible, and you are directed and ordered to make and enter such assessments upon the tax rolls of the county at the time that the state and county taxes are assessed and entered against the same property and the construction fund assessment record to which this certificate is appended shall be your authority to make such assessment.

Witness the signature of the president of said district, attested by the seal thereof, and the signature of the secretary, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President.

(SEAL)

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary.

The construction fund assessment record shall be in substantially the following form:

No. \_\_\_\_\_

CONSTRUCTION FUND ASSESSMENT RECORD  
OF  
\_\_\_\_\_ CONSERVANCY DISTRICT.  
\_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY.

FORM IX

CERTIFICATE OF LEVY OF ASSESSMENTS FOR  
MAINTENANCE FUND ASSESSMENT RECORD

State of New Mexico ) ss.  
County of \_\_\_\_\_ )

To the assessor \_\_\_\_\_ county, New Mexico.

This is to certify that by virtue and under the authority of the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, the board of directors of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district has levied the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars (\$ \_\_\_\_\_), for the account of the maintenance fund for the year 19\_\_\_\_.

The amounts of said levies upon the several parcels of land and other property upon which the same are imposed are set forth in the maintenance fund assessment record to which this certificate is appended.

The said assessments set forth in the maintenance fund assessment record, to which this certificate is appended, shall be assessed, collectible and payable for the present year in the sums therein specified at the time that the state and county taxes are due and collectible, and you are directed and ordered to make and enter such assessments upon the tax rolls of the county at the time that the state and county taxes are assessed and entered against the same property and the maintenance fund assessment record to which this certificate is appended shall be your authority to make such assessment.

Witness the signature of the president of the district attested by the seal thereof, and the signature of its secretary this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President.

(SEAL)

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary.

The maintenance fund assessment record shall be in substantially the following form:

Maintenance fund assessment record of \_\_\_\_\_ conservancy district,  
\_\_\_\_\_ county for the year \_\_\_\_\_.

(Due in the year \_\_\_\_\_, at the same times general taxes are due.)

**History:** Laws 1927, ch. 45, § 1001; C.S. 1929, § 30-1001; 1941 Comp., § 77-3024; 1953 Comp., § 75-31-24.

## **ARTICLE 18**

### **Conservancy Districts; Reclamation Contracts**

#### **73-18-1. Definition of terms.**

Except when otherwise specified, as used in this act:

A. the term "Conservancy Act" means the Conservancy Act of New Mexico, Chapter 45, Session Laws of 1927 (being Chapter 30, New Mexico Statutes Annotated, 1929 Compilation), as amended by Chapter 50, Session Laws of 1931, Chapter 80, Session Laws of 1933 and Chapter 37 and Chapter 150, Session Laws of 1935 (being Chapter 30, New Mexico Supplement, 1938), and any subsequent amendment thereof;

B. the term "reclamation law" means the act of congress approved June 17, 1902, 32 Statutes at Large 388, and acts amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto;

C. the term "district" means a conservancy district heretofore organized or existing under the provisions of the Conservancy Act;

D. the term "United States" means the United States of America;

E. the term "reclamation contract" means any contract between a district and the United States under the provisions of the reclamation law for any of the purposes set forth in Section 2 [73-18-2 NMSA 1978] hereof;

F. the term "contracting district" means any district which heretofore or hereafter shall have entered into a reclamation contract;

G. the terms "contract indebtedness" and "contract obligation" mean respectively any indebtedness or obligation undertaken by a district in a reclamation contract;

H. the terms "district lands" or "district real property" mean any real property within the boundaries of a district;

I. the term "board" means the board of directors of a district.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-3101; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-1.

### **73-18-2. Additional powers; duties of board; contract indebtedness a general obligation.**

A. Any district, in addition to all other powers heretofore conferred by law upon districts, is empowered to cooperate with the United States under the reclamation law and in the exercise of such power may enter into a reclamation contract or contracts for the purpose of the construction of irrigation works, including ancillary works and drainage works to maintain the irrigability of lands within any such district; for the purchase, extension, operation or maintenance of constructed works; for the assumption as principal or guarantor of indebtedness to the United States on account of the cost of construction or operation and maintenance of irrigation, drainage and ancillary works; for rental of water or otherwise securing a water supply for district lands; for acceptance of appointment or designation of the district as fiscal agent of the United States to make collections of monies for or on behalf of the United States in connection with any federal reclamation project, or for all or any one or more of said purposes; and all payments to become due to the United States under any reclamation contract heretofore or hereafter entered into between a district and the United States shall be paid by revenue derived from an annual assessment upon the real property of the district and all the real property in the district shall be and remain liable to be assessed for such payments until fully made. It shall be the duty of the board of a contracting district, notwithstanding any other provision of the Conservancy Act, to make and establish all levies, assessments, tolls or charges to meet each year the contract indebtedness and obligation as the same may be provided for in any reclamation contract heretofore or hereafter entered into by a contracting district and to do any and all acts necessary to carry out the provisions of any such reclamation contract.

B. A contracting district:

(1) may convey to the United States land or water rights or any interest therein, either without monetary consideration therefor or in partial consideration of the privileges derived from a reclamation contract or for other consideration;

(2) may, and if so agreed in a reclamation contract shall, withhold water from lands which under the terms of the reclamation law, a reclamation contract or rules and regulations thereunder are not entitled to receive water, and from water users or the lands of water users delinquent in the payment of any assessment, toll, rental or other

charge, but this remedy shall be in addition to all other remedies available for the enforcement of a reclamation contract or collection of assessments, tolls, rentals or other charges; and

(3) may accept the provisions of any existing or future act of congress applicable to such district.

C. The board of directors of any contracting district is hereby vested with all powers necessary and requisite for the accomplishment of the purposes for which the district is organized and for which the reclamation contract has been entered into by the district, and capable of being delegated to it by the legislature of the state of New Mexico; and no enumeration of particular powers in the Conservancy Act or in this act granted shall be construed to impair any general grant of power herein contained, nor to limit any such grant to power or powers of the same class or classes as those so enumerated.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-3102; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-2.

### **73-18-3. Contract procedure inapplicable.**

The provisions of Section 309, Chapter 45, Session Laws of 1927 (being Section 73-14-40 NMSA 1978), shall not apply to any reclamation contract.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-3103; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-3.

### **73-18-4. Plan of works.**

The provisions of the Conservancy Act as to the formulation and approval and establishment of the official plan shall not apply to contracting districts with respect to works to be constructed pursuant to a reclamation contract, but the plan of works so to be constructed by the United States shall be such plan as may be formulated, altered, extended, modified or revised by the bureau of reclamation of the department of the interior.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-3104; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-4.

### **73-18-5. When certain provisions to apply; general obligation.**

A. Except as otherwise herein provided, the provisions of the Conservancy Act relating to the appraisal and confirmation of benefits and assessments and levy pursuant thereto shall not apply to a contracting district.

B. The provisions of the Conservancy Act relating to the appraisal and confirmation of benefits and assessments and levy pursuant thereto shall, with respect to assessments and levies for works to be constructed pursuant to reclamation contracts, apply as to any contracting district which, after the passage of this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978], shall have executed a reclamation contract wherein it is expressly

so provided and in that event the provisions of this act relating to classification of district real property, the apportionment of assessments and the assessment and levy pursuant thereto shall be applicable only to the extent expressly provided for in said reclamation contract.

Notwithstanding the provisions of any other act and whether the revenues necessary to meet payments to the United States under a reclamation contract are to be raised under the provisions of Sections six, seven, eight and nine [73-18-6 to 73-18-9 NMSA 1978] of this act or under the provisions of the Conservancy Act relating to appraisal, confirmation, assessment of benefits and levy thereon, the indebtedness to the United States under a reclamation contract shall constitute a general obligation of the contracting district and of all the real property therein for the payment of which the district and all the real property therein shall be and remain liable until full payment thereof is made, notwithstanding default in payment by individual property owners.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 77-3105; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-5.

### **73-18-6. Classification of real property.**

A. For the purpose of assessment all real property in any contracting district is hereby divided into two classes. The first, which shall be known as Class "A" property, shall embrace the irrigable lands in the district and shall be assessed and levied against annually as herein provided at a uniform rate per acre. The second class shall be known as Class "B" property, which shall embrace all other real property in the district not within Class "A" and shall be assessed and levied against annually on an ad valorem basis as herein provided.

B. Within thirty days after the secretary of the interior has by public notice or otherwise designated the irrigable lands within a contracting district pursuant to a reclamation contract, the board of directors shall meet and adopt a resolution wherein all real property of the district shall be classified into Class "A" or Class "B" property as hereinabove in this section defined, giving due consideration to such designation of irrigable lands as may have been made by the secretary of the interior. Immediately after the adoption by the board of said resolution classifying the real property of the district, the board shall commence in the conservancy court proceedings to determine the validity thereof as provided in Section 20 [73-18-20 NMSA 1978] hereof. Such classification of real property as confirmed by the conservancy court shall thereafter continue in force until modified as herein provided.

C. At any time after the classification of property so made as hereinabove in this section provided the board of directors, by resolution, the consent thereto of the secretary of the interior having been first obtained, may provide for changes in such classification of lands as the welfare of the district and the property owners affected may require upon notice to the owners of the respective properties proposed to be so reclassified of the time for hearing thereon. The said notice shall be given by registered mail addressed to the last known post-office address of such owner and mailed not less

than 14 days prior to the time for hearing; provided, notice to said owner, if not a resident within the state of New Mexico, shall be given also by publication which shall be completed not less than fourteen days prior to the time for hearing. Any owner of district real property aggrieved at the decision of the board of directors as embraced in such resolution shall have the right of appeal therefrom to the conservancy court within thirty days after service upon such property owner, by registered mail, of a certified copy of such resolution. The resolution providing for such reclassification shall provide for such disposition of credits arising from payments of assessments and charges for construction costs theretofore made on account of the Class "A" property therein reclassified as Class "B" property, as the board may deem equitable and such resolution may provide for the transfer of credits on account of such payments to the parcels of land by the term of such resolution to become Class "A" property, not exceeding the aggregate of credits shown on the books of the district at the time of such reclassification in favor of the like area of property the classification of which by said resolution is changed from Class "A" property to that of Class "B" property.

D. The secretary of the district shall deliver promptly to the county assessor of each county embracing any part of the district a certified copy of each resolution of the board relating to the classification or reclassification of real property within the district and a certified copy of any judgment or order of the conservancy court which may be entered in connection with such resolution and classification or reclassification of property.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 77-3106; Laws 1949, ch. 76, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 5-32-6.

### **73-18-6.1. Reclassification of property in certain districts.**

A. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 73-18-6 NMSA 1978 and in lieu thereof, the board of directors of any conservancy district created prior to 1930 embracing land situate in four or more counties and consisting of more than one hundred thousand acres, by resolution and with prior approval of the secretary of interior, in the manner it deems necessary for the welfare of the district and the benefit of the affected property owners of the district, shall establish by January 1, 1995 a unitary classification system for all benefited real property in the district for the purpose of annual ad valorem assessments and in addition shall set a water service charge for all irrigable lands in the district. The resolution of reclassification shall not become final and effective until it has been approved by the secretary of interior. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit the authority of the board to prescribe assessments and charges on an ad valorem basis, on an acreage basis or on any other reasonable basis or any combination thereof.

B. As used in this section:

(1) "unitary classification system" means a single system for both irrigable and nonirrigable property in the district; and



(2) "water service charge" means an additional charge levied only against lands which are served by the district's water delivery system.

**History:** Laws 1993, ch. 270, § 1.

### **73-18-7. Apportionment.**

The board of a contracting district, within 30 days after execution of a reclamation contract or within 30 days after the effective date of this act, whichever date is the later, shall by resolution determine and establish an apportionment of the annual assessments to be thereafter made from year to year against the real property within the district between Class "A" property and Class "B" property as in this act defined, providing in such resolution the percentage or fractional part of such total annual assessments thereafter to be levied in accordance with Section 8 [73-18-8 NMSA 1978] of this act which shall be apportioned to Class "A" property and that which shall be apportioned to Class "B" property. The action of the board of directors in establishing such apportionment shall be subject to the approval of the secretary of the interior and after the same shall have been approved shall be submitted to the conservancy court for judicial examination, approval and confirmation of such action as in Section 20 [73-18-20 NMSA 1978] hereof provided. Such apportionment may be modified in like manner from time to time thereafter, but not more frequently than once in every five years, and no such modification or reapportionment shall become effective until the same shall have been first approved by the secretary of the interior nor until such proposed reapportionment shall thereafter have been judicially examined, approved and confirmed by the conservancy court in the same manner as the original apportionment.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 77-3107; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-7.

#### **73-18-7.1. Assessment; modification; certain districts.**

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 73-18-7 NMSA 1978 and in lieu thereof, the board of directors of any conservancy district created prior to 1930 embracing land situate in four or more counties and having more than one hundred thousand acres shall determine and establish by resolution the annual assessments to be made from year to year against real property within the district pursuant to the reclassification of property adopted pursuant to Section 73-18-6.1 NMSA 1978. Such assessment may be modified in like manner from time to time, but not more frequently than once in every five years.

**History:** Laws 1993, ch. 270, § 2.

#### **73-18-8. Assessments; appeals.**

A. The board, on a date to be fixed by a standing order of the board, which shall not be later than July 1 of each year, shall convene for the purposes in this section set forth and shall estimate and determine the amount of funds required to meet the obligations

to come due and needs of the district in the ensuing year, together with such additional amount as may be necessary to meet any deficiency in the payment of expenses or obligations previously incurred by the district and remaining due and unpaid, and an amount to cover the estimated delinquencies in payments of assessments for the ensuing year; the aforesaid obligations, needs and items of expense being for such of the following purposes as may be required by the district, to wit:

Item one. The payment of the interest upon bonds of the district and any installment on principal thereof;

Item two. Any payment to become due under any contract with the United States whether for the cost of the irrigation and drainage system and works incidental thereto or for the operation and maintenance thereof, or both, or if the reclamation contract contemplates the division of irrigable lands by the secretary of the interior, into units not necessarily contiguous for repayment purposes, the board shall prepare separate estimates for such respective units or otherwise adapt the same to the requirements of the reclamation contract;

Item three. The portion of the expense of operation and maintenance of the irrigation and drainage system to be collected by assessment and levy. This portion shall not be less than one-fourth nor more than three-fourths of the estimate for such operation and maintenance costs, including the funds required to be advanced to the United States for operation and maintenance of the irrigation and drainage systems in accordance with the provisions of the reclamation contract for the ensuing year, and shall be determined by the board from year to year, and that part thereof apportioned as in this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978] provided for assessment and levy upon Class "A" real property shall be so assessed and levied against each acre thereof, pro rata, whether irrigated or not and the same when collected shall be applied to the cost of operating and maintaining the irrigation and drainage systems. The remainder of said total amount estimated for the expense of operation and maintenance for the ensuing year shall be paid as tolls or charges by those actually using said irrigation and drainage systems and water in accordance with the terms of their respective contracts for water;

Item four. Current and miscellaneous expenses other than as above specified and including necessary expenses of maintaining the organization of the district and carrying out the purpose of this act, which may be in the aggregate in a sum which when apportioned as in this act provided, will result in a per acre charge against Class "A" lands not in excess of forty cents (40¢) per acre. That portion of the amounts to be collected under Item four apportioned to Class "A" real property, may, at the option of the board of directors of said district, be collected in whole or in part as tolls and charges in the manner provided in this act (73-18-1 to 73-18-24 [NMSA 1978]).

B. The aggregate amount so determined by the board, required to meet the obligations of the district and to be collected by assessment and levy shall be apportioned between Class "A" real property and Class "B" real property, as in this act defined, on the basis of the apportionment determined in accordance with the provisions

of Section 7 (73-18-7 [NMSA 1978]) hereof and that portion thereof apportioned to Class "A" real property shall be raised by assessment and levy to be extended pro rata per acre over all of said Class "A" property and that portion thereof so apportioned to Class "B" real property shall be raised by assessment and levy at a uniform rate ad valorem upon all of said Class "B" real property upon every dollar of the assessed valuation thereof as shown by the last preceding assessment for state and county taxes. Provided that if any Class "B" real property within the district for which benefits were appraised under the Conservancy Act does not appear on county assessment polls [rolls] for state and county taxes, the board shall have the same appraised, placed upon the county tax rolls for assessment purposes and levy the assessments herein provided against said property on the valuation so determined. Such annual assessment and levy shall be made by resolution of the board of directors. In any year or years prior to the classification of real property within the district, as provided for in Section 6 (73-18-6 [NMSA 1978]) hereof, the entire amount so determined by resolution of the board of directors to be needed to meet the obligations of the district for the ensuing year shall embrace only amounts required under the aforesaid Item four and shall be raised by annual assessment and levy at a uniform rate upon all of the real property within such district of not exceeding four mills for every dollar of the assessed valuation thereof, as shown by the last preceding assessment for state and county taxes and shall be in addition to all other taxes and assessments levied thereon.

C. When the board shall assemble for the purposes hereinbefore described it shall sit as a board of equalization and, subject to such reasonable regulations as it may prescribe, shall afford to all persons desiring to do so an opportunity to make such showing as they may deem proper as to why any given tract or parcel of real property or portion thereof should not be so assessed. In each case the board may cause to be made such investigation as it may deem proper, after which the board shall determine the question submitted as right and justice may require, and shall cause its decision to be duly entered upon its minutes and a copy thereof to be sent by registered mail to all parties who have so appeared and offered to show cause why such assessment should not be made against their respective properties.

D. Any person feeling himself aggrieved by such decision as aforesaid, may appeal therefrom to the conservancy court within thirty (30) days from and after the rendition and mailing as aforesaid of said copy of the decision complained of by serving upon the secretary of the district written notice of such action and filing a copy thereof together with the copy of the decision complained of in the office of the clerk of the conservancy court. Upon being served with such notice the secretary of the district shall forthwith transmit to the clerk of said court a certain [certified] transcript of all the papers and records pertaining to the case which may have been filed in connection therewith. Upon such appeal the case shall be tried in the conservancy court, subject to the law, rules and practice governing such court as upon a writ of certiorari.

E. The filing of said appeal in said conservancy court shall not stay the proceedings relating to the collection of said tax, but in the event that appellant has paid such tax before the rendition of final judgment in said suit and judgment is rendered in said suit in

favor of appellant, appellant shall have refunded to him such sum of money as shall be determined by the judgment of the said court, together with legal interest thereon and costs of court, but if the appellant fails to recover in said suit, appellant shall pay the costs of court.

F. The secretary of the district, not later than September first each year shall deliver to the county assessor of each county embracing any part of the district a certified copy of the resolution of the board of directors making the annual assessment and levy as in this section provided.

G. The secretary of the district shall prepare and keep a record of all land within the district classified as Class "A" showing the per acre assessments made against such land and the payment of such assessments. In preparation and keeping such record, the said secretary shall take into consideration the recommendations of the bureau of reclamation of the United States. The board of directors of the district are hereby authorized to fix the amount of such assessments and the date of the maturities thereof, in accordance with the provisions of this act. At any time any of such per acre assessments are delinquent, the board of directors may institute proceedings in the district court for the collection thereof, such proceedings to be governed by the laws applicable to mortgage foreclosures. In any such proceedings, the district court or the supreme court may allow such attorney's fees as to the court may seem equitable, such attorney's fees and court costs incurred to be a lien upon the land charged with the assessment or assessments upon which the proceedings may be had. Any number of assessments and tracts may be included in one suit. Per acre assessments shall be considered any assessment made on a per acre basis without regard to valuation. All such per acre assessments shall bear interest at the rate of 12% per annum from the date of delinquency until paid. The county treasurer and the county assessor are hereby relieved from all responsibility with regard to per acre assessments for such conservancy district. All such assessments shall be liens upon the real estate upon which such assessments are made as of the date of the action of the board of directors of the conservancy district fixing such assessments.

H. For the purposes of the assessment and enforcement of all liens provided by this act, the records and plats of the conservancy district shall be official records, and certified copies of such records and plats duly authenticated by the secretary of said conservancy district, under the seal of said district, shall be admissible as evidence in all courts of this state. Cognizance is hereby taken of the difficulty or impossibility of such plats of irregular irrigable tracts being exact, and inaccuracies in such plats and descriptions which do not affect the validity of any liens upon such irrigable tracts; and in proceedings for the enforcement of any liens created by this act, the court may in its discretion correct any errors which may appear. Provided such corrections or errors shall not affect adversely the substantial rights of the parties; and the court shall have power in any proceeding for the enforcement of such liens to clarify any descriptions which may be inaccurate. Provided such action of the court does not do substantial injustice to any party.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 8; 1941 Comp., § 77-3108; Laws 1949, ch. 77, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-8; Laws 1961, ch. 231, § 1.

### **73-18-8.1. Assessments; appeals; certain districts.**

A. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 73-18-8 NMSA 1978 and in lieu thereof, the board of directors of any conservancy district created prior to 1930 embracing land situate in four or more counties and having more than one hundred thousand acres shall convene on a date to be fixed by order of the board, but not later than July 1 of each year, for the purpose of estimating and determining the amount of funds required to meet the obligation and needs of the district for the ensuing year together with such additional amounts as may be necessary to meet any deficiency in the payment of expenses or obligations previously incurred by the district and remaining due and unpaid and an amount to cover the estimated delinquencies in payments of assessments for the ensuing year.

B. In levying ad valorem assessments on benefited property, the board of the district shall set non-residential assessments at least twenty-five percent higher than residential and agricultural assessments and any ad valorem assessments shall be levied against all benefited real property, including improvements.

C. In setting water service charges, the board of the district shall assess such charges on a per acre basis on all irrigable acres as they appear on the records of the district for tracts or rate payers for which water availability under contract occurs and shall set a minimum one-acre charge of at least twenty-eight dollars (\$28.00) per acre, but not more than twenty-eight dollars (\$28.00) per acre during the first year, and may use the parity index or other cost-of-living index or measure to determine annual adjustments to the water service charges to reflect the increased costs of providing irrigation water. Any landowner seeking irrigation water for land not previously irrigated may request such irrigation water and upon a determination that the water is available and upon execution of a water use contract with the district prior to March 1 of the year in which the water is sought, the landowner upon payment of the water service charge shall receive the irrigation water.

D. The board of directors shall then by resolution set the appropriate ad valorem assessments and water service charges it determines necessary and appropriate to meet such obligations and needs of the district.

E. In levying appropriate ad valorem assessments and water service charges, the board shall consider:

(1) the degree to which the proposed revenue structure reflects the cost of providing service;

(2) the administrative feasibility of the proposed revenue structure;

(3) whether the proposed revenue structure promotes open space, green space or other environmentally beneficial activities; and

(4) any other local economic or social impacts resulting from the proposed revenue structure.

F. The board shall sit as a board of equalization, subject to such reasonable rules as it may adopt, for the purpose of affording all owners of real property in the district subject to receiving a water service charge and an opportunity to appear and show why any given tract or parcel should be assessed differently. The board's decision with respect to such protest shall be entered upon the official minutes of the board and a copy of such decision shall be sent to the protesting property owner by registered mail.

G. Any owner of real property aggrieved by the decision of the board sitting as a board of equalization may appeal to the district court of the second judicial district in the manner prescribed by Subsection D of Section 73-18-8 NMSA 1978. The filing of such appeal shall be made within thirty days after receipt of the decision of the board sitting as a board of equalization. The filing of such appeal shall not stay the proceedings relating to the collection of the assessment but in the event the appellant has paid the assessment before rendition of the final judgment in the appeal suit and where such judgment is in favor of the appellant, the appellant shall have refunded to him the sum of money as determined by the court, together with legal interest thereon and costs paid to the court.

H. Not later than September 1 each year, the secretary of the district shall deliver to the county assessor of each county embracing any part of the district a certified copy of the board's annual ad valorem assessment rate.

I. All ad valorem assessments and water service charges of the district constitute prior liens upon the real property on which they are levied as of the date of the action of the board fixing such assessments and charges and such liens shall be enforced in the same manner as assessments of property taxes for state and county purposes are collected and liens thereof are enforced.

**History:** Laws 1993, ch. 270, § 3.

### **73-18-9. District treasurer; county treasurers; assessors; duties; accounts; collection and disposition of assessments.**

A. The district treasurer of a contracting district and the county treasurer of each county in which is located any part of a contracting district shall, in connection with assessments, levies and collections made as authorized under The Conservancy District-Reclamation Contract Act, keep a district bond fund account, a district contract fund account, a district operation and maintenance fund account and a district general fund account. The proceeds of the assessment collected shall be deposited into the respective funds:

(1) the bond fund shall consist of all money collected for principal and interest on the bonds issued by the district;

(2) the district contract fund shall consist of all money received from assessments levied to provide for payment to the United States, including funds for operation and maintenance required to be paid to the United States under any reclamation contract;

(3) the operation and maintenance fund shall consist of all money received on account of operation and maintenance of the irrigation and drainage system, except money to be paid to the United States pursuant to any contract; and

(4) the general fund shall consist of all money received on account of current and miscellaneous expenses not to be deposited into any other of the funds.

B. It is the duty of the district treasurer to collect and receipt for all per acre assessments levied as provided in The Conservancy District-Reclamation Contract Act in accordance with the resolutions and orders of the board of directors of the district. It is the duty of each of the county treasurers to collect and receipt for all ad valorem assessments levied in the same manner and at the same time as is required in the receipt for and collection of taxes upon real estate for county purposes and on the first Monday of each month to remit to the district treasurer money previously collected or received by him on account of the district, including penalties and interest on ad valorem assessment delinquencies.

C. The district treasurer shall pay out of the bond fund when due the interest and principal of the bonds of the district at the time and place specified in the bonds. The district treasurer shall pay out of the contract fund all payments as they become due to the United States under a reclamation contract at the time and in the manner provided in the contract. The district treasurer shall pay out of the operation and maintenance fund only upon warrants signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary of the district, directed to the party or parties as are due payments for operating and maintaining the irrigation and drainage systems. The district treasurer shall pay out of the general fund only upon orders signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary of the district.

D. The district treasurer on the fifteenth day of each month shall report to the board of directors of the district the amount of money in hand to the credit of the respective funds as provided in this section. All such district taxes collected and paid to the county treasurers shall be received by the treasurers in their official capacity, and they shall respectively be responsible for the safekeeping, disbursement and payment of them the same as for other money collected by them as treasurers.

E. Payment of ad valorem assessments levied pursuant to The Conservancy District-Reclamation Contract Act may be received and receipted for by the county

treasurer either together with or separately from taxes upon real estate for state and county purposes.

F. The county assessor of each county embracing any part of the district shall from time to time as the same may be requested by or on behalf of the board of directors of the district furnish abstracts or copies of ad valorem assessments rolls pertaining to property situated in the district. Upon receipt of a certified copy of resolution of the board of directors making the annual levy of district ad valorem assessments, the county assessor shall certify and extend the assessment and levy upon the assessment rolls.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 9; 1941 Comp., § 77-3109; Laws 1949, ch. 75, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-9; 1995, ch. 75, § 2.

### **73-18-9.1. County treasurers; district treasurers; certain districts; collection and disposition of assessments.**

A. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 73-18-9 NMSA 1978 and in lieu thereof, the county treasurer of any county wholly or partly within a conservancy district created prior to 1930, situate in four or more counties and consisting of more than one hundred thousand acres, shall collect and receipt for all ad valorem assessments levied by the conservancy district.

B. The county treasurer of any county specified in Subsection A of this section shall collect the ad valorem assessments in the same manner and at the same time as is required for the collection of taxes upon real property for county purposes.

C. The county treasurer shall remit such collections as provided in this section to the conservancy district treasurer no later than the twentieth of each month in the manner prescribed by Subsection B of Section 73-18-9 NMSA 1978.

D. The treasurer of the conservancy district shall collect and receipt for all water service charges levied in accordance with the resolution and orders of the board of directors of the district.

**History:** Laws 1993, ch. 270, § 4.

### **73-18-10. Lien of assessments.**

All assessments levied to meet any indebtedness due or to become due to the United States pursuant to the reclamation law, rules and regulations, a reclamation contract or notices or statements issued by the secretary of the interior thereunder, together with all interest on all assessments and penalties for default in payment of the same, and all costs in collecting the same, shall from the date on which there is filed in the office of the assessor of the county in which is situated the property upon which such assessment is made a certified copy of the resolution of the board determining the



amount of money to be raised, fixing the rate of such assessments and making a levy therefor, shall constitute a perpetual lien upon all the district real property against which such assessments shall be so levied, to which only the lien for general or special state, county, city, town, village or school taxes shall be paramount, and no sales of such property to enforce any general or special state, county, city, town, village, school tax or other lien shall extinguish the perpetual lien of such assessments nor extinguish the liability of such property to future assessment for payment of any indebtedness to the United States provided for in a reclamation contract; and every other assessment hereafter levied upon any real property within the district, under the provisions of this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978], is and shall be a lien upon the property against which such assessment is levied. All such assessments shall be collected, and all such liens shall be enforced in the same manner as assessments of taxes for state and county purposes are collected and the liens thereof are enforced.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 10; 1941 Comp., § 77-3110; Laws 1947, ch. 205, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-10.

### **73-18-11. State lands; public lands.**

A. The board of a contracting district shall cause notice to be given to the commissioner of public lands annually of the amount of assessment to become due on account of lands of the state within the district and the commissioner of public lands shall cause the same to be paid out of any funds in his hands not otherwise appropriated.

B. Public lands of the United States within any contracting district shall be subject to assessment for all purposes of this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978] to the extent provided by the act of congress approved August 11, 1916, 39 Statutes at Large 506, upon full compliance therewith by the district.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 11; 1941 Comp., § 77-3111; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-11.

### **73-18-12. Land disposal contracts authorized.**

Contracts made by contracting districts, or landowners within contracting districts, for the purpose of limiting and controlling the size of land holdings entitled to receive water and providing for the disposition of lands in excess of such holdings, and of providing the manner of application of proceeds in the case of sales of district lands, in conformance with the provisions of the reclamation law, are hereby authorized and declared to be in accordance with the public policy of this state.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 12; 1941 Comp., § 77-3112; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-12.

### **73-18-13. Water applications.**

Every person desiring to receive water for use upon lands in a contracting district during the course of the year shall make application at the office of the district, furnishing therewith a statement in writing of the number of acres intended by him to be irrigated and a statement as near as may be of the crops planted or intended to be planted, which application upon its acceptance by or on behalf of the board of directors shall constitute a water service contract for the year covered thereby, subject to the reclamation law, reclamation contracts and rules and regulations thereunder, to the provisions of the Conservancy Act and this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978]; and said application and resulting contract may provide, among other things, for tolls and charges for water which may be used in excess of the amount to which the applicant may be entitled on account of assessments and such tolls and charges shall constitute a lien upon lands upon which water is so used, and the water service contract records of a contracting district shall constitute public notice of the existence of such lien.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 13; 1941 Comp., § 77-3113; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-13.

### **73-18-14. Tolls and charges; advance payment; omitted property.**

For the purpose of defraying the expenses of the district in carrying out the purposes of this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978] and in the care, operation, management, repair and improvement of all canals, ditches, reservoirs and related works, including salaries and expenses of officers and employees, or for payment of charges to the United States for the temporary rental of water, for operation and maintenance of the irrigation and drainage system and incidental or related works or for any or all of said purposes the board may fix rates of tolls and charges and collect the same of all persons using the said irrigation and drainage system or the water supply made available thereby. Said tolls and charges shall be in addition to the assessments and levies elsewhere provided for in this act, and shall be fixed so that the revenue estimated to be derived therefrom in the year for which fixed, together with the amount of assessments for that year will be not less than the estimated obligation to come due and needs of the district for that year as determined under Section 8 A [73-18-8 A NMSA 1978] of this act; provided, that such assessments, tolls or charges for operation and maintenance of the said irrigation and drainage system or related and incidental works, or for the use of the water supply made available thereby, may be fixed in accordance with the reclamation law, and the rules and regulations of the secretary of the interior thereunder and the reclamation contract and statements and notices issued pursuant thereto.

Whenever any tolls and charges for the use of water have been fixed by the board of a contracting district it shall be lawful to make the same payable in advance and in case any such tolls and charges remain unpaid or any balances for water delivered by measurement are unpaid at the time specified for levying the annual assessment, the amount due for such tolls and charges or balances may be added to and become a part of the assessment levied upon the land [on] which the water for which such tolls, charges or balances are unpaid, was used. Any land which may have escaped assessment for any year or years shall, in addition to the assessment for the then

current year, be assessed for such year or years with the same effect and with the same penalties as are provided for the current year and any property delinquent for any year may be correctly assessed during the current year for any expenses caused to the contracting district on account of such delinquency. In the event that any land within a contracting district, subject to assessment for any of the purposes of the district, has not been assessed and does not appear upon the assessment roll as prepared for the treasurer and collector, the land so omitted shall be forthwith assessed by the treasurer upon an order of the board of directors and as so ordered a description of the property so omitted shall be written on the roll and the proper assessment levied.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 14; 1941 Comp., § 77-3114; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-14.

### **73-18-15. Distribution of water supply.**

All water, the right to the use of which is acquired by a district under a reclamation contract, shall be distributed and apportioned by the district in accordance with the acts of congress and rules and regulations promulgated or approved by the secretary of the interior, and the provisions of said contract in relation thereto. A contracting district may rent or lease water for use for any purpose within or without the district in pursuance of and in accordance with the provisions of said contract. The board of a contracting district may adopt rules and regulations for the distribution, apportionment and use of the district water supply, not inconsistent with those of the secretary of the interior, acts of congress or said contract and the same shall become effective when approved by the secretary of the interior.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 15; 1941 Comp., § 77-3115; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-15.

### **73-18-16. Use of district funds to pay contract indebtedness.**

There may be used to pay indebtedness to the United States created by a reclamation contract, as the same may become due, the preliminary fund, construction fund, maintenance fund, guarantee fund or conservation and development fund, or any one or more of said funds, provided for by the Conservancy Act, of any contracting district within the provisions of Section 5 (B) [73-18-5 B NMSA 1978] of this act.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 16; 1941 Comp., § 77-3116; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-16.

### **73-18-17. Removal of structures; passing equipment through bridge or grade and other powers.**

In pursuance of a plan or plans made by the bureau of reclamation of the department of the interior and for the accomplishment of the construction, operation or maintenance by the United States of irrigation, drainage or ancillary or incidental works beneficial to a contracting district, the rights, powers and privileges vested in the district and its officers and agents under the provisions of Section 308, Section 313, and

Section 314 of Chapter 45, Session Laws of 1927 (being respectively Section 73-14-39, Section 73-14-44 and Section 73-14-45, New Mexico Statutes Annotated, 1978 Compilation), in addition and not to the exclusion of any rights, powers or privileges otherwise available to the United States, its officers, agents and employees, may be exercised by the engineer of said bureau of reclamation in charge of such works under like conditions as therein provided for the exercise of such powers by the district.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 17; 1941 Comp., § 77-3117; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-17.

### **73-18-18. Cumulative rights and remedies.**

In addition to all rights, remedies and securities under this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978] or otherwise available to the United States for the security, enforcement and collection of contract indebtedness created by a reclamation contract, all provisions of the Conservancy Act applicable to the security, enforcement and collection of conservancy bonds, refunding bonds or other district obligations or indebtedness shall be available to afford the security, enforcement and collection of said contract indebtedness.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 18; 1941 Comp., § 77-3118; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-18.

### **73-18-19. Change in organization or boundaries of district.**

After a reclamation contract has been entered into by a contracting district, except upon the written consent thereto of the secretary of the interior, no change shall be made in the organization or boundaries of such district, either by the exclusion therefrom of district lands, by the inclusion therein of new lands, or by dissolution of the district or otherwise.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 19; 1941 Comp., § 77-3119; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-19.

### **73-18-20. Proceedings to determine validity.**

A. The board of any contracting district shall commence special proceedings in and by which the proceedings had for the organization and establishment of the district and in and by which the authorization, due execution and validity of a reclamation contract may be judicially examined, approved and confirmed. Such proceedings shall be brought as to any district which has heretofore executed a reclamation contract within sixty days after the effective date of this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978] and in all other cases within sixty days after the execution of such contract. Like proceedings may and when so required by any provision of this act shall be commenced by the board for the judicial examination, approval and confirmation of any bond issue, assessment, resolution providing for apportionment of assessments to classes of property or classifying property, order, act, proceeding or contract of such district.

B. Commencement of such proceedings shall be by the filing by the board of directors of the district in the conservancy court provided for by the provisions of the Conservancy Act of a petition praying in effect that the proceedings had for the organization of the district or the reclamation contract or other contract, bond issue, assessment, resolution providing for apportionment of assessments to classes of property, or classifying property, order, act or proceeding or any one or more thereof may be examined, approved and confirmed by the court. The petition shall state the facts, showing the proceedings had for the issue and sale of bonds of the district or the pertinent facts pertaining to a reclamation contract, bond issue, assessment, resolution providing for apportionment of assessments to classes of property or classifying property, order, act, proceeding or contract or one or more thereof, but the petition need not state the facts showing such organization of the district and it shall be sufficient that it be stated therein generally that the district was duly organized.

C. The court shall fix a time for the hearing of said petition, which time shall be not less than ten days after the last publication of notice herein provided for, and shall order the clerk of the court to give and publish a notice in form to be prescribed by the court in such order, of the filing of such petition. The notice shall be given and published in the English language once each week for four consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation published in each county wherein shall be situated any lands within the district. Such notice also shall be published for a like time in Spanish in any county where publication of such notice is required to be made wherein there is a newspaper of general circulation published in the Spanish language. The notice shall state the time and place fixed for the hearing of the petition and the prayer of the petitioners and that any person interested in the organization of the district, reclamation contract, bond issue, assessment, resolution providing for apportionment of assessments to classes of property or classifying property, order, act, proceeding or contract in question may, on or before the date fixed for the hearing of said petition, demur to or answer said petition. The petition may be referred to and described in said notice as the petition of the board of directors of . . . . . conservancy district (giving its name), praying that the proceedings for the organization of the district, the validity of the reclamation contract, bond issue, assessment, resolution providing for apportionment of assessments to classes of property or classifying property, order, act, proceeding or contract, as the case may be, may be examined, approved and confirmed by the court.

D. Any person interested in said district or in the reclamation contract, bond issue, assessment, resolution providing for apportionment of assessments to classes of property or classifying property, order, act, proceeding or contract as may be in issue as herein provided, at any time before but not after the time for hearing as fixed in said notice, may file demurrer or answer or both to said petition. The person so demurring and answering said petition shall be the defendant to the special proceeding and the board of directors shall be the plaintiff. Every material statement of the petition not specifically controverted by the answer shall, for the purpose of said special proceeding, be taken as true, and each person failing to answer the petition shall be deemed to admit as true all the material statements of the petition. The rules of pleading and practice and rules of the supreme court relating to appeals and writs of error, as the

same may be in force at the time of any such appeal, which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this act are applicable to the special proceedings herein provided for; provided, appeals to the supreme court of the state, involving the special proceedings herein mentioned, shall be taken within twenty days and shall be perfected within sixty days after the granting of any such appeal.

E. Upon the hearing of such special proceeding the court shall find and determine whether the notice of the filing of the petition has been duly given and published for the time and in the manner in this act prescribed and shall have power and jurisdiction to examine and determine the legality and validity of, and approve and confirm each and all of the proceedings for the organization of said district under the provisions of the Conservancy Act from and including the petition for the organization of the district, and all other proceedings which may affect the legality or validity of said bonds and the order of the sale thereof and shall have power and jurisdiction to examine and determine the legality and validity of the reclamation contract, bond issue, assessment, resolution providing for apportionment of assessments to classes of property or classifying property, order, act, proceeding or contract as the case may be. The court, in inquiring into the regularity, legality or correctness of said proceedings, must disregard any error, irregularity or omission which does not affect the substantial rights of the parties to said special proceedings; and the court may by decree approve and confirm, in whole or in part, such proceedings and the validity thereof or of the reclamation contract, bond issue, assessment, resolution providing for apportionment of assessments to classes of property or classifying property, order, act, proceeding or contract or disapprove and declare the same illegal or invalid in whole or in part. The cost of the special proceedings may be allowed and apportioned between the parties in the discretion of the court. A judgment when finally made and entered shall be res judicata in all cases arising in connection with the organization of the district, classification of real property within the district, apportionment of assessments and the collection of taxes for payment of the principal and interest of bonds or for payment of monies to the United States, required by a reclamation contract.

F. The procedure in this section and each and every subsection thereof provided shall govern in the absence of any supreme court rule governing the subject matter of this section, but the provisions of this section shall be subject to the rule-making power of the supreme court.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 20; 1941 Comp., § 77-3120; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-20.

### **73-18-21. Contracts validated.**

Any reclamation contract heretofore entered into by any district with the United States for any of the purposes enumerated in Section two [73-18-2 NMSA 1978] hereof, together with any and all action taken by or on behalf of a contracting district in pursuance thereof, is hereby ratified, validated and confirmed and such contract is hereby declared to be and the same shall remain a valid and subsisting obligation of the contracting district and all the real property within the contracting district shall be and

remain liable to be assessed in the manner in this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978] provided, for payments to become due to the United States under such contract until fully paid.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 21; 1941 Comp., § 77-3121; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-21.

### **73-18-22. Scope of act.**

The provisions of Section 2 B [73-18-2 B NMSA 1978] and Section 3 to Section 25 [73-18-3 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978], inclusive, of this act shall apply only to conservancy districts heretofore or hereafter organized or existing under the Conservancy Act and which heretofore or hereafter shall have entered into a contract with the United States under the reclamation law.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 22; 1941 Comp., § 77-3122; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-22.

### **73-18-23. [Repeal.]**

All acts and parts of acts inconsistent with the provisions of this act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978] are hereby repealed; but nothing herein contained shall be construed to repeal any provision of the Conservancy Act, except as the provisions thereof, in their application to a contracting district, may conflict with the provisions hereof.

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 23; 1941 Comp., § 77-3123; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-23.

### **73-18-24. Designation of act.**

This act [73-18-1 to 73-18-24 NMSA 1978] may be cited as "The Conservancy District-Reclamation Contract Act".

**History:** Laws 1939, ch. 148, § 25; 1941 Comp., § 77-3124; 1953 Comp., § 75-32-24.

### **73-18-25. Conservancy districts to which act applies.**

Sections 73-18-25 through 73-18-43 NMSA 1978 apply to conservancy districts organized under the laws of New Mexico having a contract with the United States under the reclamation laws of the United States, as provided under Chapter 73, Article 18 NMSA 1978, and having an area of land of all classes within the exterior boundaries of the district of more than one hundred thousand acres and less than one hundred forty-five thousand acres.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-25, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 1; 1993, ch. 285, § 1; 2011, ch. 72, § 1.

### **73-18-26. Division of district into election precincts.**

In all counties in this state in which there exists a conservancy district within the classification as provided in Section 73-18-25 NMSA 1978, or a major portion by area of such a conservancy district, the board of county commissioners of the county shall, on the first Monday in August 1955, by resolution to be made a part of the minutes of the board of county commissioners, divide the conservancy district into election precincts. If there is a municipality within the district, the municipality shall constitute one election precinct, and the conservancy district shall be divided into three election precincts, each of which election precincts shall have approximately equal acreage of irrigable land. Immediately after the action by the board of county commissioners, the clerk of the board of county commissioners shall transmit to the clerk of the conservancy district within the county, or the major portion of which is within that county, a certified copy of the resolution dividing the conservancy district into election precincts. The board of county commissioners shall redivide the district in the same manner in each sixth year after 1955. Immediately after the resolution is adopted, the clerk of the board of county commissioners shall file a certified copy of the resolution of the board of county commissioners in the office of the county clerk of the county.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-26, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 2; 1993, ch. 285, § 2.

### **73-18-27. Elections.**

In each odd-numbered year after 1955, elections shall be called and conducted pursuant to the provisions of Sections 73-18-25 through 73-18-43 NMSA 1978 for the election of directors to succeed any directors whose terms expire in that year. Elections shall be held on the second Tuesday of October of each odd-numbered year. The election shall be called by the board of directors by resolution that shall fix for each election precinct within the district outside the municipality and designate the necessary qualified electors of each election precinct to act as judges of the election in each precinct. At the discretion of the board of directors of the conservancy district, the election may be held at any place within the district. Judges of the election shall be paid an amount to be determined by the board of directors for service. Expenses of the elections shall be paid by the district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-27, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 3; 2011, ch. 72, § 2; 2018, ch. 79, § 153; 2025, ch. 21, § 16.

### **73-18-28. Director-at-large and municipal director.**

A. The director to represent the municipality and the director-at-large for the period from October 1955 to October 1957 shall be selected at the September 1955 meeting by the board of directors of the conservancy district as it exists prior to the election. The members shall be elected from the membership of the previously existing board if there are qualified members of the board willing to serve for the additional two years. If there



are no members of the existing board willing to serve for the additional period of two years or if there is only one, the existing board may select one or both of the directors from qualified electors of the district for the position or positions.

B. In the election to be held in October 1957, a director to represent the municipal voting precinct shall be elected from the qualified electors of the municipality, and a director-at-large shall be elected from the qualified electors of the district.

C. Every resident, otherwise qualified, owning real estate of any character within the district shall have one vote for director-at-large. Each elector resident of the municipal voting precinct shall have one vote for municipal director. The right of a voter to vote for municipal director shall not be affected by the elector voting in any other election precinct in which the elector may own class "A" land.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-28, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 4; 2018, ch. 79, § 154; 2025, ch. 21, § 17.

### **73-18-29. Conservancy district board; how constituted.**

After the election herein provided, boards of directors of such districts shall consist of five directors, one representing each election precinct of such district, and one director-at-large. All of such directors shall have equal powers and responsibilities. In case of vacancy through death, resignation, removal from the district or failure of any elected director to qualify, the remaining members of the board shall, by majority vote, fill such vacancy. The person selected to fill such vacancy shall hold such position until the next election of directors in such district. At the next election of directors of such district, following a vacancy, a director shall be elected to fill such vacancy.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-29, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 5.

### **73-18-30. Qualifications of electors.**

The board of directors of the conservancy district shall, by resolution, adopt a plan with necessary rules and regulations by which nonresident owners of land or other owners of land may vote for directors by absentee ballot.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-30, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 6; 1993, ch. 285, § 3; 2011, ch. 72, § 3.

### **73-18-31. Ownership.**

Any person who has exclusive possession and control of irrigable land under a purchase contract, which purchase contract has been approved by the district, and in connection with which any incremented value to be paid to the United States has been paid in full, shall be considered the owner of such land for the purpose of qualifying such purchaser to vote in voting districts outside of the municipality, and the vendor of

the land covered by such contract shall not be entitled to vote as the owner of such land. This section shall not apply to lessees whose lease contains an option to purchase, unless and until such option to purchase shall have been exercised.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-31, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 7.

### **73-18-32. Voting rights.**

A. In district precinct elections, landowners owning one acre of irrigable land five months preceding the election shall be entitled to one vote for each acre of irrigable land or major fraction of an acre owned by the landowner up to one hundred sixty acres. Landowners owning less than one acre of irrigable land have no vote. A landowner may vote in all voting precincts in which the landowner has irrigable land, entitling the landowner to vote as provided in Sections 73-18-30 and 73-18-31 NMSA 1978.

B. For director-at-large, all persons who are over the age of eighteen and who have been the owners of real estate within the district for more than two months preceding the election shall be entitled to one vote.

C. All persons who are over the age of eighteen and who have been the owners of real estate within any municipality within the district for more than two months preceding the election shall be entitled to one vote for director representing the municipal election precinct.

D. To qualify voters to vote for directors-at-large and for director representing the municipal voting precinct, the ownership of real estate by the spouse shall be considered also ownership by the other spouse.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-32, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 8; 1993, ch. 285, § 4; 2011, ch. 72, § 4.

### **73-18-33. Qualifications of directors.**

The director-at-large shall be the owner of class "A" land within the district and shall be a resident of the district. The director for the municipal election precinct shall be a resident and shall be the owner of real estate within the district boundaries of the municipality. A director representing a district election precinct outside the municipality shall be a resident of the district and the owner of irrigable land within the voting precinct for which the director is a director.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-33, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 9; 1993, ch. 285, § 5; 2018, ch. 79, § 155.

### **73-18-34. Becoming a candidate for director.**

Any person wishing to become a candidate for the office of director in any district shall by the last Friday of July before the election file in the office of the secretary of the district a declaration of candidacy stating the election precinct for which the person is a candidate, accompanied by a petition signed by not less than ten qualified electors of the election precinct for which the person is a candidate to represent. No declaration of candidacy shall be accepted by the secretary unless accompanied by such petition, signed by electors.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-34, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 10; 2011, ch. 72, § 5; 2018, ch. 79, § 156; 2025, ch. 21, § 18.

### **73-18-35. Term of office for director.**

The regular term of office for a director is four years, and the director shall serve until a successor has been chosen and has qualified. A director shall qualify by taking an oath of office. Newly elected directors shall take office on the date that their terms of office begin following the election of the director.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-35, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 11; 2018, ch. 79, § 157.

### **73-18-36. Compensation of directors.**

Each director shall receive compensation payable out of the funds of the district in an amount to be determined by the board of directors of the district; provided that no director may receive an increase in compensation during the term for which that director was elected.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-36, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 12; 2011, ch. 72, § 6.

### **73-18-37. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-37, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 13; 1978 Comp., § 73-18-37, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-18-38. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-38, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 14; 1978 Comp., § 73-18-38, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

### **73-18-39. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-39, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 15; 1978 Comp., § 73-18-39, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

## **73-18-40. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-40, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 16; 1978 Comp., § 73-18-40, repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 176.

## **73-18-41. Application of general election laws.**

In any election held under Sections 73-18-25 through 73-18-43 NMSA 1978, the general election laws shall be applicable except as otherwise provided in Sections 73-18-25 through 73-18-43 NMSA 1978 and except as to the requirement for registration and residence in state, county or precinct as a qualification of an elector in offering to vote.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-41, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 17; 2018, ch. 79, § 158; 2025, ch. 21, § 19.

### **73-18-41.1. Election rules and procedures; forms; notice of election; ballots; polling places; absentee voting; canvass of election returns; certification.**

The board of directors may promulgate necessary and reasonable rules for the administration of its elections, including provisions for: public notice of elections; selection of election judges; opening and closing of polling places; the printing and form of ballots; mail or absentee voting; voting locations; instructions to voters; canvassing of election returns; and certification of elections.

**History:** 1978 Comp., § 73-18-41.1, enacted by Laws 2025, ch. 21, § 20.

## **73-18-42. File of county clerk.**

The county clerk of the county shall keep a file in which shall be kept all papers received by said county clerk, in connection with such conservancy district, under the provisions of this act [73-18-25 to 73-18-43 NMSA 1978]. Such county clerk shall keep a record or index of all such instruments received for filing as the same are filed.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-42, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 18.

## **73-18-43. Penalties.**

The negligent failure of the secretary or of any member of the board of directors shall be punished by a fine of not to exceed \$50.00. The willful violation of this act [73-18-25 to 73-18-43 NMSA 1978] by omission or commission by the secretary or any director of said district or the willful making of a false statement by any person in connection with any election covered by this act, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$300. Proceedings against any such official may be instituted in any justice

of the peace court [magistrate court], sitting within the district or in the district court of the county within [wherein] such district has its office.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-32-43, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 281, § 19.

## **ARTICLE 19**

### **Tri-State Water Conservancy Association**

#### **73-19-1. [Tri-state water conservancy association created.]**

There is hereby created an organization to be known as the tri-state water conservancy association.

**History:** Laws 1937, ch. 55, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 77-3201; 1953 Comp., § 75-33-1.

#### **73-19-2. [Governing body; number; selection; eligibility.]**

That such organization shall be governed by a board of nine directors, to be selected as follows: three directors to be selected by the county commissioners of each of the counties of Quay, Curry and Roosevelt, and the directors selected to be residents, property owners and taxpayers in the counties from which they are selected.

**History:** Laws 1937, ch. 55, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 77-3202; 1953 Comp., § 75-33-2.

#### **73-19-3. [Directors; gratuitous service; terms; filling vacancies.]**

That the directors, once selected, shall serve without pay, one director from each county is to serve for a period of one year from the date of his selection, one director from each county is to serve for two years from the date of his selection and one director from each county is to serve for three years from the date of his selection, and the respective successors of the first directors to serve for a period of three years; that any vacancy in said board of directors shall be filled by the board of county commissioners of the county wherein the director whose office is to be filled resided.

**History:** Laws 1937, ch. 55, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 77-3203; 1953 Comp., § 75-33-3.

#### **73-19-4. [Powers of directors.]**

That said board of directors shall have the power and it shall be its duty to cooperate with the representatives of the Texas counties, or any agencies created by the state of Texas or by said counties, interested in an effort to secure funds from the United States government, its officers, bureaus and agencies, for water conservation purposes in the counties of Quay, Roosevelt and Curry, in New Mexico, and to enter into all proper and necessary negotiations and agreements with the officers and employees of the federal

government for the location of federal water conservancy projects in the three counties mentioned.

**History:** Laws 1937, ch. 55, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 77-3204; 1953 Comp., § 75-33-4.

### **73-19-5. [No indebtedness to be contracted; organization; meetings; employees and agents.]**

That said directors shall not have the right to contract any indebtedness whatsoever, either on behalf of the state of New Mexico or the counties for which they are chosen. That the board of directors of said conservancy association shall select such officers, representatives and employees as they may see fit, all of whom are to serve without compensation unless compensation for their services can be arranged with the United States government or by public contributions. That they shall meet and organize within ten days after their appointment. The exact date and place of the first meeting shall be set by the county commissioners of Curry county, New Mexico, and the date and place of subsequent meetings shall be fixed by the board of directors.

**History:** Laws 1937, ch. 55, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 77-3205; 1953 Comp., § 75-33-5.

## **ARTICLE 20**

### **Soil and Water and Watershed Conservation Districts**

#### **73-20-1. Short title.**

Sections 73-20-1 through 73-20-24 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Watershed District Act".

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-19, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 1; 2018, ch. 79, § 159; 2019, ch. 212, § 251.

#### **73-20-2. Definitions.**

As used in the Watershed District Act:

- A. "directors" means directors of the watershed districts;
- B. "minority jurisdiction district" means a soil and water conservation district that has within its jurisdiction a minority of the land in a watershed district; and
- C. "supervisors" means supervisors of soil and water conservation districts in which the watershed district is located.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-20, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 2; 1973, ch. 332, § 1; 1977, ch. 254, § 45; 2025, ch. 46, § 1.

### **73-20-3. Purpose of act.**

The purpose of the Watershed District Act is to secure the federal assistance provided in Public Law 566 of the 83rd congress, and amendatory legislation, for New Mexico in its program to further the conservation, development, utilization, flood prevention and disposal of water, and thereby preserve and protect New Mexico's land and water resources.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-21, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 3.

### **73-20-4. Watershed districts; formation.**

Watershed districts may be formed as subdistricts of soil and water conservation districts in a watershed area, as provided in the Watershed District Act, for the purpose of developing and executing plans and programs relating to any phase of conservation of water, or of water usage, including water-based recreation, flood prevention, flood control, erosion prevention and control of erosion, and floodwater and sediment damages.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-22, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 4; 1965, ch. 84, § 1; 1973, ch. 332, § 2; 1977, ch. 254, § 46.

### **73-20-5. Area.**

The land area embraced in districts must be contiguous and must lie within a well-defined watershed area or subwatershed areas. The districts may embrace lands lying in one or more soil and water conservation districts, or lands lying partly within and partly outside a soil and water conservation district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-23, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 5; 1973, ch. 332, § 3; 1977, ch. 254, § 47.

### **73-20-6. Petitions.**

When fifty or more landowners within a proposed watershed district, or twenty percent of the landowners within the proposed district, whichever is less, desire to form a watershed district, they shall file a petition with the board of supervisors. The petition shall define the boundaries of the proposed district, the number of acres of land involved, reasons for requesting creation of the district, the proposed name for the watershed district and other information pertinent to the proposal. In the event of a challenge to the validity of signatures on a petition, the burden of proof shall be on the sponsors of the petition.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-24, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 6; 1975, ch. 294, § 1; 2003, ch. 228, § 1.

### **73-20-7. Presentation of petitions.**

If the proposed watershed district lies in more than one soil and water conservation district, the petition may be presented to the board of supervisors of any one of such districts and the supervisors of all such districts shall act as a joint board of supervisors in the formation and supervision of such a watershed district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-25, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 7; 1973, ch. 332, § 4; 1977, ch. 254, § 48.

### **73-20-8. Hearing; notice.**

A. Within thirty days after the petition has been filed with the board of supervisors, it shall cause due notice to be given by publication for three consecutive weeks, once a week on the same day of each week, immediately prior to the action in a newspaper of general circulation in the area, and, if no newspaper of general circulation exists, shall post in not less than eight public places within the area, notice of a hearing upon the practicability and feasibility of creating the district. In addition to the publication provided for in this subsection, absentee landowners shall be notified by first class mail if their whereabouts can be ascertained by reasonably diligent search. All interested parties shall have the right to attend such hearing and be heard. If it shall appear at the hearing that other lands should be included or that lands included in the petition should be excluded, the board of supervisors may permit such inclusion or exclusion.

B. If it appears upon the hearing that it may be desirable to include within the proposed district, territory outside of the area within which due notice of the hearing has been given, the hearing shall be adjourned and due notice of a further hearing shall be given throughout the entire area considered for inclusion in the district and a further hearing shall be held. After final hearing, if the board of supervisors determines, upon the facts presented at the hearing and upon other available information, that there is need, in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare for such a district to function in the territory considered, it shall make and record the determination and shall define by metes and bounds or by legal subdivisions, the boundaries of the district.

C. If the board determines after the hearing that it is not feasible for such district to function in the territory considered, it shall make and record the determination and shall deny the petition.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-26, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 8; 1961, ch. 233, § 1; 1975, ch. 294, § 2.

### **73-20-9. Referendum.**



After the board of supervisors has made and recorded a determination that there is need, in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare, for creation of the proposed watershed district, it shall consider the question whether the operation of a district within the proposed boundaries with the powers conferred upon such districts in Section 73-20-13 NMSA 1978 is administratively practicable and feasible. To assist the board of supervisors in this determination, the board shall, within a reasonable time after entry of the finding that there is need for the organization of the district and the determination of the boundaries of the district, hold a referendum within the proposed district upon the proposition of the creation of the district. Due notice of the referendum shall be given as provided in the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978].

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-27, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 9; 1975, ch. 294, § 3; 2018, ch. 79, § 160; 2019, ch. 212, § 252.

### **73-20-10. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-28, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 10; 2003, ch. 228, § 2; 2018, ch. 79, § 161; repealed by Laws 2019, ch. 212, § 284.

### **73-20-11. Votes; results.**

The votes shall be counted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978]. If a majority of the votes cast favors creation of the district, the county canvassing board shall certify the results to the county clerk in the county involved. Upon proper recording of the action, the watershed district shall be duly created. After recording, the certification shall be filed with the New Mexico department of agriculture.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-29, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 11; 1973, ch. 332, § 5; 1977, ch. 254, § 49; 1987, ch. 234, § 74; 2003, ch. 228, § 3; 2018, ch. 79, § 162; 2019, ch. 212, § 253.

### **73-20-12. Directors; election.**

A. A watershed district shall be governed by a board of directors appointed by the board of supervisors for the soil and water conservation district in which the watershed district is located. Except as provided in Subsection C of this section, a board of directors shall consist of five directors; provided that, when available, one director shall be a current or former elected director of the watershed district.

B. When appointing the initial directors for a watershed district, a board of supervisors shall appoint two members to serve terms of two years and three members to serve terms of four years. Thereafter, new appointments to the watershed district board shall be for terms of four years. Vacancies occurring before the expiration of a term shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired remainder of a term.

C. If the territory embraced within a watershed district lies within more than one soil and water conservation district, each minority jurisdiction district shall be entitled to appoint three additional directors. When appointing the additional directors, a board of supervisors shall appoint one director to serve a term of two years and two directors to serve terms of four years. Thereafter, new directors shall be appointed for terms of four years. All vacancies shall be filled by appointment by the minority jurisdiction districts for the remainder of an unexpired term.

D. The board of directors shall annually elect from its membership a chair, secretary and treasurer. The treasurer shall execute an official bond for the faithful performance of the duties of office to be approved by the board of directors. The bond shall be executed with at least three solvent personal sureties whose solvency shall exceed the amount of the bond, or by a surety company authorized to do business in this state, and shall be in an amount determined by the board of directors. If the treasurer is required to execute a surety company bond, the premium of the bond shall be paid by the board of directors.

E. The board of directors shall prepare and submit to the department of finance and administration such reports as it may require from among those required to be submitted by other political subdivisions.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-30, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 12; 1973, ch. 332, § 6; 1977, ch. 254, § 50; 2003, ch. 228, § 4; 2018, ch. 79, § 163; 2019, ch. 212, § 254; 2025, ch. 46, § 2.

### **73-20-13. Authority.**

Subject to the approval of the board of supervisors, the board of directors of a watershed district shall have power to:

A. levy an annual assessment on the real property within the district, within the limitations provided in Section 73-20-17 NMSA 1978, for administration, construction, operation and maintenance of works of improvement within and without the district as are required by the district in the performance of its functions;

B. acquire by purchase, gift, grant, bequest, devise or through condemnation proceedings in the manner provided in the Eminent Domain Code [42A-1-1 to 42A-1-33 NMSA 1978] property or rights of way necessary for the exercise of any authorized function of the district; provided that no property or water rights shall be condemned for the purposes of recreation;

C. construct, improve, operate, contract for and maintain such structures as may be necessary for the performance of any function authorized by the Watershed District Act;

D. borrow money necessary for the purpose of acquiring rights of way and establishing, constructing, reconstructing, repairing, enlarging and maintaining the

structures and improvements required by the district in the performance of its functions and repay these loans with the proceeds of the annual assessment provided for in Subsection A of this section or by the issuance, negotiation and sale of its bonds as provided in Section 73-20-14 NMSA 1978; and

E. receive and grant assistance and cooperate with counties, municipalities and state and federal agencies in carrying out the provisions of the Watershed District Act.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-31, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 13; 1961, ch. 233, § 2; 1965, ch. 84, § 2; 1975, ch. 294, § 4; 1981, ch. 125, § 59; 2003, ch. 228, § 5.

## **73-20-14. Bonds.**

A. Bonds authorized by Section 73-20-13 NMSA 1978 shall not be issued until proposed by order or resolution of the board of directors, specifying the purpose for which the funds are to be used, and the proposed undertaking, the amount of bonds to be issued, the rate of interest they are to bear and the amount of any necessary assessment levy in excess of the maximum authorized in Section 73-20-17 NMSA 1978 to establish a sinking fund for the liquidation of bonds as provided in Section 73-20-17 NMSA 1978. A copy of the order or resolution shall be certified to the board of supervisors.

B. The board of supervisors shall conduct a hearing on the proposal after notice given pursuant to Section 73-20-8 NMSA 1978. If it appears that the proposal is within the scope and purpose of the Watershed District Act [73-20-1 NMSA 1978 et seq.] and meets all other requirements of the law, the proposal shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the district at an election held pursuant to the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978].

C. If two-thirds of the qualified electors voting on the ballot question favor the proposal, the bonds may be issued.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-32, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 14; 1965, ch. 84, § 3; 1975, ch. 294, § 5; 2003, ch. 228, § 6; 2018, ch. 79, § 164; 2019, ch. 212, § 255.

## **73-20-15. Loans; repayments.**

A. In addition to the borrowing of money by the issuance of bonds for the purposes set out in Section 73-20-13 NMSA 1978, the district may borrow money from the United States department of agriculture or any other federal agency if the loan can be repaid according to its terms by use of the levy authorized by Section 73-20-17 NMSA 1978 and the board of supervisors has so determined.

B. The district may also borrow money from the United States department of agriculture or any other federal agency and levy an assessment not to exceed five dollars (\$5.00) on each one thousand dollars (\$1,000) of net taxable value, as that term

is defined in the Property Tax Code [Chapter 7, Articles 35 to 38 NMSA 1978], of property subject to taxation by the district, in addition to others authorized by the Watershed District Act, to repay the loan if the board of directors determines the rate of the levy required and:

- (1) secures the approval of the board of supervisors;
- (2) a referendum on the acceptance of the loan for specified purposes is held;
- (3) two-thirds of the landowners voting favor the proposal; and
- (4) the procedures of Sections 73-20-8 through 73-20-11 NMSA 1978 as to notice, qualifications of voters and manner of holding referendum election are followed in the referendum held under this section.

**History:** 1953 Comp., enacted by Laws 1961, ch. 233, § 3; 1975, ch. 294, § 6; 1986, ch. 32, § 37.

### **73-20-16. Per diem and mileage.**

Members of the board of directors shall receive no salaries, but the members shall be entitled to be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of the Per Diem and Mileage Act [10-8-1 to 10-8-8 NMSA 1978].

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-33, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 15; 2003, ch. 228, § 7.

### **73-20-17. Budgets; tax levy; limitation.**

Within the first quarter of each calendar year, the board of directors shall prepare an itemized budget of the funds needed for administration, construction, operation and maintenance of works of improvement. After approval of the budget by the board of supervisors, the board of directors shall, by order or resolution, levy an assessment sufficient to meet the budget, not to exceed five dollars (\$5.00), or any lower maximum amount required by operation of the rate limitation provisions of Section 7-37-7.1 NMSA 1978 upon the assessment authorized by this section, on each one thousand dollars (\$1,000) of net taxable value, as that term is defined in the Property Tax Code [Chapter 7, Articles 35 to 38 NMSA 1978], of all real property subject to taxation within the district, except that the limit on assessments does not apply to any levy necessary to provide a sinking fund for retirement of bonds authorized by Section 73-20-13 NMSA 1978. A copy of the budget and order or resolution shall be certified to the county assessor of the county or counties involved and to the department of finance and administration by July 15 of each year.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-34, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 16; 1986, ch. 32, § 38; 2003, ch. 228, § 8.

### **73-20-18. Assessment lists.**

A. The board of directors shall prepare a list of the landowners within the defined boundaries of the watershed district in each county involved showing the number of acres subject to assessment and deliver it to the county assessor of the county involved. The assessor shall indicate the information on the tax rolls.

B. The county assessor shall compute the assessment due the district from each landowner in accordance with the rate fixed by the board of directors and the value of the real property indicated on the tax roll. The computation shall be made on the regular tax bills in the manner as may be directed by regulation of the property tax division of the taxation and revenue department.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-35, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 17; 1977, ch. 249, § 28; 2003, ch. 228, § 9.

### **73-20-19. Collection of assessments.**

A. The county treasurer shall collect the assessment due the district at the same time and in the same manner in which he collects the state and county ad valorem tax. The county treasurer shall retain a fee for collections of the assessment equal to four percent of the assessment collected or the actual cost, whichever is less.

B. Such assessments shall be subject to the same due and delinquency date, discounts, penalties and interest as are applied to the collection of ad valorem taxes.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-36, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 18.

### **73-20-20. Expenditures.**

Assessment funds collected shall be transferred to and held by the treasurer of the watershed district for the specific purpose for which they have been collected. All expenditures of such funds shall be made by the board of directors upon order of the board, approved by the board of supervisors of the soil and water conservation district or districts involved.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-37, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 19; 1973, ch. 332, § 7; 1977, ch. 254, § 51.

### **73-20-21. Addition of land.**

A. Any one or more owners of land may petition the board of supervisors to have their lands added to a watershed district. The petition shall define the boundaries of the land desired to be annexed, the number of acres of land involved and other information pertinent to the proposal. When the boundary described embraces lands of others than

the petitioners, the petition shall so state and shall be signed by twenty-five or more of the landowners in the territory described, if fifty or more such owners are involved, or by a majority if fewer than fifty landowners are involved.

B. Within thirty days after the petition is filed, the board shall cause due notice to be given as provided in Section 73-20-8 NMSA 1978 of a hearing on the petition. All interested parties shall have a right to attend the hearing and be heard. The board shall determine whether the lands described in the petition or any portion of them shall be included in the district. If all the landowners in the territory involved are not petitioners, a referendum shall be held within the territory in accordance with the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978]. If it is determined by the qualified electors of the district that the land should be added, this fact shall be certified by the board of supervisors to the county clerk in the county involved. After recording, the certification shall be filed with the New Mexico department of agriculture.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-38, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 20; 1973, ch. 332, § 8; 1977, ch. 254, § 52; 1987, ch. 234, § 75; 2003, ch. 228, § 10; 2018, ch. 79, § 165; 2019, ch. 212, § 256.

### **73-20-22. Detaching land.**

The owner or owners of land who have not been, are not and cannot be benefited by their inclusion in the watershed district and whose lands do not contribute to the district's purposes may petition the board of supervisors to have the lands withdrawn. The petitions shall be filed with the board of supervisors and the board of directors and shall describe the lands and state the reasons why they should be withdrawn. If it is determined by the board of supervisors that the lands shall be withdrawn, the determination shall be certified to the county clerk of each county in which any portion of the lands lie. After recording, the certification shall be filed with the New Mexico department of agriculture.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-39, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 21; 1973, ch. 332, § 9; 1975, ch. 294, § 7; 1977, ch. 254, § 53; 1987, ch. 234, § 76; 2003, ch. 228, § 11; 2013, ch. 17, § 1; 2013, ch. 169, § 1.

### **73-20-23. Discontinuance of districts.**

A. At any time after five years from the organization of a watershed district, a majority of the landowners in the district may file a petition with the board of supervisors and the board of directors requesting that the existence of the district be discontinued if all obligations of the district have been met. The petition shall state the reasons for discontinuance and demonstrate that all obligations of the district have been met.

B. After giving notice as defined in Section 73-20-8 NMSA 1978, the board of supervisors may conduct hearings on the petition as may be necessary to assist it in making a determination.

C. Within sixty days after petition is filed, a referendum shall be held pursuant to the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978].

D. If a majority of the votes cast in the referendum favors the discontinuance of the district and it is found that all obligations have been met, the board of supervisors shall make a determination that the watershed district shall be discontinued. A copy of the determination shall be certified by the clerk of the county involved for recording. After recording, the certification shall be filed with the New Mexico department of agriculture.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-40, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 22; 1973, ch. 332, § 10; 1975, ch. 294, § 8; 1977, ch. 254, § 54; 1987, ch. 234, § 77; 2003, ch. 228, § 12; 2013, ch. 17, § 2; 2013, ch. 169, § 2; 2018, ch. 79, § 166; 2019, ch. 212, § 257.

### **73-20-24. Supervision by courts.**

If any supervising soil and water conservation district is discontinued, the district court of the county or counties involved shall serve in the same supervising capacity over the watershed district as the board of supervisors.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-41, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 210, § 23; 1973, ch. 332, § 11; 1977, ch. 254, § 55.

### **73-20-25. Short title.**

Sections 73-20-25 through 73-20-48 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Soil and Water Conservation District Act".

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-42, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 1; 1973, ch. 324, § 1; 1977, ch. 254, § 56; 2003, ch. 88, § 1.

### **73-20-26. Legislative determination; purpose of act.**

A. Considered and resolved by legislative determination, it is declared that:

(1) the land, waters and other natural resources are the basic physical assets of New Mexico, and their preservation and development are necessary to protect and promote the health and general welfare of the people of the state;

(2) the improper use of land and related natural resources, soil erosion and water loss result in economic waste in New Mexico through the deterioration of the state's natural resources; and

(3) appropriate corrective and conservation practices and programs must be encouraged and executed in New Mexico to conserve and develop beneficially the soil, water and other natural resources of the state.

B. It is declared to be the policy of the legislature and the purpose of the Soil and Water Conservation District Act [73-20-25 to 73-20-48 NMSA 1978] to:

- (1) control and prevent soil erosion;
- (2) prevent floodwater and sediment damage;
- (3) further the conservation, development, beneficial application and proper disposal of water;
- (4) promote the use of impounded water for recreation, propagation of fish and wildlife, irrigation and for urban and industrial needs; and
- (5) by the application of these measures, conserve and develop the natural resources of the state, provide for flood control, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of New Mexico.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-43, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 2.

### **73-20-27. Definitions.**

As used in the Soil and Water Conservation District Act [73-20-25 to 73-20-48 NMSA 1978]:

- A. "district" means a soil and water conservation district as described in Section 73-20-44 NMSA 1978;
- B. "supervisor" means a member of the governing body of a district;
- C. "commission" means the soil and water conservation commission;
- D. "agencies of the United States" includes the natural resources conservation service of the United States department of agriculture;
- E. "landowner" includes resident and nonresident owners of natural resources;
- F. "due notice" means the publication or broadcasting of the appropriate information by newspapers of general circulation and, if appropriate, broadcast stations licensed by the federal communications commission, or by other means that meet the requirements of the Open Meetings Act [Chapter 10, Article 15 NMSA 1978]. If print or broadcast media do not service the affected geographical area, due notice may be given by posting the appropriate information in notice form in six conspicuous public places where it is customary to post notices concerning county or municipal affairs within the affected geographical area;
- G. "department" means the New Mexico department of agriculture;



H. "director" means the director of the department;

I. "natural resources" includes land, except for the oil, gas and other minerals underlying the land; soil; water; air; vegetation; trees; wildlife; natural beauty; scenery; open space; and human resources, when appropriate;

J. "board of regents" means the board of regents of New Mexico state university; and

K. "registered voter" means a person who is registered to vote in New Mexico pursuant to the provisions of the Election Code [Chapter 1 NMSA 1978].

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-44, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 3; 1973, ch. 324, § 2; 1977, ch. 254, § 57; 1987, ch. 234, § 78; 1997, ch. 137, § 3; 2003, ch. 88, § 2.

### **73-20-28. Soil and water conservation commission members.**

There is created a "soil and water conservation commission" to be composed of seven appointed members and five ex-officio members. The seven appointed members shall be selected by and serve at the pleasure of the governor. Six of the appointed members shall be supervisors and shall be selected and appointed from a panel of three candidates from each region, compiled by the districts of each region and presented by the president of the New Mexico association of conservation districts. One appointed member shall be selected at large and shall be a person interested and active in the conservation or development of natural resources in New Mexico. The five ex-officio members shall serve without vote and shall include:

A. the governor or his designee;

B. the associate director of the cooperative extension service of New Mexico state university or his designee;

C. the associate director of the agricultural experiment station of New Mexico state university or his designee;

D. the state conservationist of the natural resources conservation service of the United States department of agriculture or his designee; and

E. the president of the New Mexico association of conservation districts or his designee.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-45, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 4; 1973, ch. 324, § 3; 1977, ch. 254, § 58; 2003, ch. 88, § 3.

### **73-20-29. Selection of commission chairman; quorum; compensation; function.**

A. Upon the appointment of seven members by the governor, the commission shall organize and designate a chairman, who shall serve at the pleasure of the commission.

B. In the performance of commission functions, a majority of the appointed members shall constitute a quorum; the concurrence of a quorum majority shall be required to carry or to determine any matter of commission business.

C. Members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be entitled to be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of the Per Diem and Mileage Act [10-8-1 to 10-8-8 NMSA 1978].

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-46, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 5; 1977, ch. 254, § 59; 2003, ch. 88, § 4.

### **73-20-30. Repealed.**

### **73-20-31. Powers and duties of department and commission.**

A. The supervising officer of any state agency or post-secondary educational institution shall, within the limitations of his budget and the demands of his agency or institution, assign staff or personnel, render special reports and undertake surveys or studies pertaining to soil and water conservation for the commission and the department as requested.

B. The department, with the advice of the commission, shall:

(1) assist districts in the development of district soil and water conservation programs and, from such programs, develop a soil and water conservation program for the state;

(2) provide information for supervisors concerning the experience and activities of all districts and facilitate the exchange of experience and advice among districts;

(3) promote cooperation between districts and, by advice and consultation, assist in the coordination of district programs;

(4) secure and maintain the cooperation and assistance of state and federal agencies and seek to secure and maintain the cooperation and assistance of national, state and local organizations and groups interested or active in natural resources conservation and development;

(5) disseminate information throughout the state concerning district activities and programs; and

(6) encourage and, within budget limitations, render assistance to district activities and facilitate and encourage the formation of new districts in areas where district organization is desirable.

C. The commission may:

(1) advise the department and the board of regents concerning any matter that in its opinion has a significant impact on or otherwise substantially affects soil and water conservation; and

(2) promulgate rules to carry out the provisions of the Soil and Water Conservation District Act [73-20-25 to 73-20-48 NMSA 1978].

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-47, enacted by Laws 1978, ch. 175, § 1; 1987, ch. 234, § 79; 1997, ch. 137, § 4; 2003, ch. 88, § 5.

### **73-20-32. Additional duties of department.**

In addition to all other powers and duties of the department, it shall:

A. upon request and within budget limitations, provide land-use planning assistance in the areas of terrain management consisting of flood control, drainage, erosion and measures required for adapting proposed development to existing soil characteristics and topography; and

B. with the advice of the commission, divide the state into six soil and water conservation regions and assign each of the currently created soil and water conservation districts or those created in the future to one of the six geographical regions. Division and assignment may be amended from time to time with the advice of the commission as the boundaries of the districts alter or other conditions warrant.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-47.1, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 324, § 4; 1977, ch. 254, § 62; 1997, ch. 137, § 5.

### **73-20-33. Soil and water conservation districts; creation.**

A. Twenty-five landowners whose land lies within the exterior limits of a geographical area proposed to be organized into a district may petition the commission for the organization of a district. The petition shall state:

(1) the proposed district name;

(2) the need for the proposed district and the manner in which it would be in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare;

(3) by accurate description, supplemented and depicted by an accurate map, the geographical area proposed to be organized into a district; and

(4) a request that:

(a) the commission define the boundaries of the proposed district;

(b) a referendum be held within the boundaries submitting to the voters' determination the question of creating the district; and

(c) if a majority of votes cast are in favor of creating the district, the commission subsequently declare the proposed district be created.

B. If any portion of the same geographical area is described in more than one petition, the commission may consolidate petitions in the manner it deems expedient.

C. In the event of a challenge to the validity of signatures on a petition, the burden of proof shall be on the sponsors of the petition.

D. Within thirty days next succeeding the filing of a petition, the commission shall cause due notice to be given to all affected persons of a hearing scheduled to determine the necessity and desirability of the proposed district and to determine district boundaries, the propriety of the petition and any other relevant questions. All affected or interested persons may attend a commission hearing and shall have the right to be heard. If, upon hearing, it is determined to be desirable to include in a proposed district lands not contemplated by the petition, the hearing shall adjourn, an amended petition shall be required and due notice shall be given to all affected persons.

E. The commission shall determine, at the conclusion of a hearing, whether a proposed district is necessary and desirable. In making its determination of the necessity of a proposed district and in defining district boundaries, the commission shall consider:

(1) the need for the proposed district and its probable effect upon the public health, safety and welfare;

(2) the topography and composition of soils comprising the area of the proposed district;

(3) the distribution of erosion within the proposed district and within surrounding lands;

(4) the prevailing land-use practices; and

(5) the probable effect of the proposed district upon, and its relation to, watersheds, agriculturally productive lands and other extant or proposed districts.

F. The findings of the commission and its final determination shall not be limited solely to an evaluation of the facts adduced at the hearing or those set forth in a petition, but shall be predicated upon all reliable information available to the commission, including reports, studies and other authoritative publications.

G. If the commission finds that a proposed district is necessary and desirable, it shall approve the petition, enter and record its final determination and define the district by legal description. If the commission finds no need for a proposed district, it shall deny the petition and enter and record its final determination. A geographical area or a substantial portion of it may not be the subject of a petition submitted for consideration by the commission more than one time in any calendar year.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-48, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 7; 1977, ch. 254, § 63; 2003, ch. 88, § 6.

### **73-20-34. Soil and water conservation districts; creation; referendum.**

A. When a final determination of the commission that a proposed district is necessary and desirable has been entered and recorded, the commission shall then determine whether the operation of the district is administratively practicable. To assist in this determination, the commission shall call for a referendum on the proposed district within the geographical boundaries of the district as defined by the commission, to be conducted on the next succeeding first Tuesday in May, if practicable. All registered voters residing within the proposed district shall be eligible to vote.

B. The commission shall:

- (1) provide for due notice of a referendum within a proposed district;
- (2) confirm eligibility of registered voters; and
- (3) adopt and publish rules to govern the orderly conduct of a referendum.

C. A referendum may not be held during an interval when valid rules adopted and published by the commission are not in effect.

D. The proposal shall be presented to the voters on ballots that define, in general terms and by legal description, the area encompassed within the proposed district.

E. Informalities or irregularities in the conduct of a referendum shall have no effect upon its result if due notice requirements have been substantially complied with and balloting has been fairly conducted in substantial compliance with the rules adopted and published by the commission.

F. The commission shall publish referendum results and make a final determination of whether the proposed district is administratively practicable; provided, however, in the event that approval of the proposed district is not carried by a majority of votes cast in a referendum, the commission shall deny the petition and shall enter and record its order.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-49, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 8; 1977, ch. 254, § 64; 2003, ch. 88, § 7; 2005, ch. 141, § 1.

### **73-20-35. Soil and water conservation districts; organization.**

A. Upon the determination that a proposed district is necessary and administratively practicable, the commission shall appoint two interim supervisors who reside within the district who shall be the governing body of the district until an election of supervisors is held. The two interim supervisors shall present to the secretary of state their verified application, stating:

- (1) a recital of the proceedings conducted;
- (2) that all proceedings were undertaken lawfully and in accordance with the provisions of the Soil and Water Conservation District Act [73-20-25 to 73-20-48 NMSA 1978];
- (3) the name of the proposed district and its geographical boundaries;
- (4) the name and official residence of each applicant together with a certified copy of each appointment evidencing the applicant's right to office; and
- (5) the designation of the principal office of the supervisors of the district.

B. The verified application of the two district interim supervisors shall be accompanied by certified copies of the commission's recorded orders of determination that the proposed district is necessary and is administratively practicable.

C. The secretary of state, upon finding the application and its supporting attachments are in substantial compliance with the provisions of this section, shall receive, file and record the application in an appropriate book of record and issue to the applicants, under state seal, a certificate of organization of the district. From the date of issuance of the certificate of organization by the secretary of state, the district shall be a governmental subdivision of the state. In any action or proceeding relating to a district or an act of the district, the certificate of organization of the district shall be admissible in evidence as proof of its contents.

D. If the secretary of state finds the name of a proposed district to be the same as or substantially similar to the name of an existing organized district, he shall certify the fact to the commission. The commission shall, with the assistance of the interim supervisors, select and submit a new name to the secretary of state.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-50, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 9; 1977, ch. 254, § 65; 2003, ch. 88, § 8.

### **73-20-36. Soil and water conservation districts; modification of existing districts.**

A. Unless otherwise provided by this section, petitions to modify the boundaries of an existing district shall be subject to the same requirements for notice, hearing, determination of necessity and desirability, referendum and determination of administrative practicability as are required for petitions for the organization of a district pursuant to the Soil and Water Conservation District Act [73-20-25 to 73-20-48 NMSA 1978].

B. Petitions for including additional land within an existing organized district, signed by twenty-five registered voters residing in the district or within the boundaries of the additional land proposed to be included or signed by two thirds of the owners of the additional land proposed to be included, whichever is less, may be filed with the commission. If the petition is signed by two thirds or more of the owners of the additional land proposed to be included in the district, the commission may enter its determinations without hearing or referendum. The commission shall advise the department of all petitions filed pursuant to this section.

C. Petitions for severing land from the defined geographical area of an existing organized district, or for its severance and inclusion within another existing organized district, signed by twenty-five registered voters residing in the district or within the boundaries of the land proposed to be severed or signed by two thirds of the owners of the land proposed to be severed, whichever is greater, may be filed with the commission. If the petition is signed by two thirds or more of the owners of the land to be severed or is submitted by the board of supervisors of each district affected, the commission may enter its determinations without hearing or referendum.

D. Petitions for consolidating two or more districts or for separating an existing district into two or more districts may be filed with the commission by the board of supervisors of each district affected. After due notice, a public hearing shall be held in each district affected. If petitions have been filed pursuant to this subsection and approved as provided in the Soil and Water Conservation District Act [73-20-25 to 73-20-48 NMSA 1978], it shall not be necessary to obtain the consent of the registered voters within the districts prior to the consolidation or division.

E. The commission shall give written notice to the secretary of state of any modification in the defined geographical area of an existing district; the notice of modification shall describe and portray by map the modified geographical area. The secretary of state shall note, file and record each modification and shall issue, under state seal, a certificate of reorganization to each district affected. Certificates of reorganization shall have the same effect as the certificates they supersede.

F. The commission shall supervise reorganization of the affairs of the district when boundaries are modified.

G. In the event a supervisor of a district is disqualified from holding office by the modification of the district, the supervisor shall be deemed to have resigned and a successor shall be appointed to serve the unexpired term by the commission.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-51, enacted by Laws 1978, ch. 85, § 1; 1997, ch. 137, § 6; 2003, ch. 88, § 9.

### **73-20-37. District supervisors; election and appointment; new districts.**

A. The governing body of a district shall be composed of five supervisors who shall be residents of the district and shall be elected pursuant to the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978]; provided, however, that two additional supervisors may be appointed to the governing body of each district by the commission in accordance with the provisions of the Soil and Water Conservation District Act. Four elected supervisor positions of each district shall be filled by landowners within the defined geographical area of their district. One elected supervisor position shall be designated supervisor-at-large, and the supervisor filling that position may serve the district without landowner qualification.

B. In the first election of supervisors to serve a newly organized district, two supervisors shall be elected for terms of four years and three supervisors shall be elected for terms of two years. Thereafter, each elected supervisor shall serve a term of four years and shall continue in office until a successor has been elected or appointed and has completed an oath of office. A vacant unexpired term of the office of an elected supervisor shall be filled by appointment by the remaining supervisors of the district. Two or more vacant unexpired terms occurring simultaneously in the same district shall be filled by appointment by the commission.

C. Appointed interim supervisors may continue to serve as appointed supervisors until their successors are elected at the next local election pursuant to the Local Election Act.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-52, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 11; 1973, ch. 324, § 6; 1977, ch. 254, § 67; 1997, ch. 137, § 7; 2003, ch. 88, § 10; 2018, ch. 79, § 167.

### **73-20-38. District supervisors; election and appointment; organized districts.**

A. Successors to supervisors whose terms end in a calendar year shall be elected pursuant to the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978]. Elections shall be called, conducted and canvassed in accordance with the Local Election Act.



B. By June 15 of each year, the district supervisors may submit to the commission a list of persons interested in the district and who by experience or training are qualified to serve as supervisors. The commission may appoint from the list submitted two persons to serve as supervisors if it is the determination of the commission that the appointments are necessary or desirable and would benefit or facilitate the work and functions of the district. In the event a list is not submitted to the commission by the supervisors by June 15, the commission may appoint two supervisors qualified to serve by training or experience. Appointed supervisors shall serve a term of one year and shall have the same powers and perform the same duties as elected supervisors. Successors to appointed supervisors, or replacement-appointed supervisors in the event of vacancy, shall be appointed by the commission from a list of candidates in accordance with the provisions of this subsection.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-53, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 12; 1973, ch. 324, § 7; 1977, ch. 254, § 68; 1997, ch. 137, § 8; 2003, ch. 88, § 11; 2005, ch. 141, § 2; 2018, ch. 79, § 168.

### **73-20-39. Election of supervisors; district zones.**

In adopting and publishing rules for the election of supervisors and the registration of district voters, the commission may, to ensure proper representation of district voters and to facilitate district functions, provide for the geographic zoning of a district. The commission shall provide for the proper and equitable representation for each faction geographically zoned in the district. If a district is divided, or if two or more districts are consolidated, the commission shall provide for the geographic zoning of the resulting district or districts within thirty days after the secretary of state issues the certificate of organization for each new district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-54, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 13; 1973, ch. 324, § 8; 1977, ch. 254, § 69; 2003, ch. 88, § 12.

### **73-20-40. Selection of supervisor chairman; quorum; compensation.**

Within a reasonable time after each district election and after newly elected supervisors have completed the oath of office, the supervisors of a district shall organize and shall designate a chairman who shall be a supervisor and who shall serve at the pleasure of the supervisors. In the performance of district functions, a majority of supervisors shall constitute a quorum; the concurrence of the quorum majority shall be required to carry or to determine any matter of district business. Supervisors shall not receive compensation for their services but shall be entitled to be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of the Per Diem and Mileage Act [10-8-1 to 10-8-8 NMSA 1978]. Supervisors may purchase group health insurance benefits for themselves and their dependents pursuant to the Group Benefits Act [Chapter 10, Article 7B NMSA 1978] and pursuant to the rules and procedures set forth by that act and the risk management division of the general services department.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-55, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 14; 1973, ch. 324, § 9; 2003, ch. 88, § 13; 2006, ch. 88, § 4.

### **73-20-41. Powers and duties of supervisors.**

A. Supervisors may employ a secretary and other agents, employees and technical or professional experts as they require and may determine qualifications, compensation and duties applicable to any agent, employee or expert engaged.

B. Supervisors shall require and provide for the execution of a corporate surety bond in suitable penal sum for and to cover any person entrusted with the care or disposition of district funds or property.

C. Supervisors may delegate their powers to one or more supervisors or to one or more district employees, agents or experts.

D. Supervisors shall call upon the county clerk of a county within which all or a part of the district lands are located for advice and assistance with conduct of elections and referenda.

E. Supervisors may call upon the district attorney of the judicial district within which all or a part of the district lands may be situate for legal services required by the district. Supervisors may invite the legislative body of any municipality or county within, near or comprising a part of the district to designate a representative to advise and consult with the supervisors on matters affecting property, water distribution or other matters of interest to the municipality or county.

F. Supervisors are authorized to adopt and publish rules necessary for the proper execution of district duties and activities. The supervisors shall:

(1) keep a full and accurate record of all district proceedings and of all resolutions, rules and orders issued or adopted;

(2) provide for and submit to an annual financial audit pursuant to the Audit Act [12-6-1 to 12-6-14 NMSA 1978] if the district's annual revenue is five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) or more;

(3) provide for a financial report, according to rules for financial reporting that are established by the state auditor, in lieu of the requirement to submit to an annual financial audit pursuant to the Audit Act if the district's annual revenue is less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000);

(4) furnish to the commission a complete report of district proceedings and activities during each fiscal year, including a financial report;

(5) furnish or make available to the commission, upon request, district files and copies of rules, orders, contracts, forms and other documents adopted or employed in conducting district activities; and

(6) call and give due notice of at least one regular meeting of the supervisors each month of the calendar year, unless otherwise approved by the commission.

G. Supervisors and district employees are public employees for the purposes of the Tort Claims Act [41-4-1 to 41-4-27 NMSA 1978] and shall be provided all insurance and self-insurance coverage provided by the risk management division of the general services department.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-56, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 15; 1977, ch. 254, § 70; 1981, ch. 337, § 2; 1997, ch. 137, § 9; 2003, ch. 88, § 14; 2009, ch. 204, § 1.

### **73-20-42. Removal of supervisors.**

A supervisor may be removed from office by the commission if it appears to the commission, after reasonable notice and impartial hearing, that the supervisor is guilty of misfeasance or malfeasance in office. The office of a supervisor who has missed three consecutive regular meetings of the supervisors may be declared vacant by majority vote of the remaining supervisors. The office of a supervisor who has missed four consecutive regular meetings of the supervisors shall be declared vacant and his successor shall be elected or appointed as in [the] case of any other vacancy.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-57, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 16; 1977, ch. 254, § 71; 2003, ch. 88, § 15.

### **73-20-43. Perpetuation of districts; continuity of commission and supervisors.**

Soil conservation districts created and organized under the provisions of the Soil Conservation District Law [repealed], and continued as soil and water conservation districts created and delineated by the Soil and Water Conservation District Act [73-20-25 to 73-20-48 NMSA 1978], and continued as natural resource districts created and delineated by the Natural Resource Conservation District Act are perpetuated and shall continue to exist as soil and water conservation districts created and delineated by the Soil and Water Conservation District Act. Members of the state soil conservation committee and supervisors of state soil conservation districts which were perpetuated in office and continued to serve as members of the state soil and water conservation committee and as supervisors of soil and water conservation districts, respectively, until their successors were elected and appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Soil and Water Conservation District Act, and were perpetuated in office and continued to serve as members of the state natural resource conservation commission and as supervisors of natural resource conservation districts respectively, until their successors were elected and appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Natural Resource

Conservation District Act, are perpetuated in office and shall continue to serve as members of the soil and water conservation commission and as supervisors of soil and water conservation districts, respectively, until their successors are elected and appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Soil and Water Conservation District Act.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-58, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 17; 1973, ch. 324, § 10; 1977, ch. 254, § 72.

### **73-20-44. Districts; description; general powers of districts.**

A "soil and water conservation district", organized under or perpetuated by the provisions of the Soil and Water Conservation District Act [73-20-25 to 73-20-48 NMSA 1978], is a governmental subdivision of the state, a public body politic and corporate. By and through its supervisors, a district may:

A. conduct research, investigations and surveys treating soil erosion and floodwater and sediment damage, concerning the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of all waters and relating to control programs and public works necessary to facilitate conservation and development. To prevent duplication of research activities, district investigative programs shall be initiated in cooperation with a governmental unit, if any, conducting or charged with the conduct of research in the same or similar scientific field;

B. publish and disseminate research findings and preventive and control measures relating to resource conservation and development;

C. with the consent and cooperation of the landowner or the state or federal agency administering the land, conduct projects upon land within the district to demonstrate by example the methods by which soil and other natural resources may be conserved, by which soil erosion in the form of blowing and washing may be controlled or prevented and by which flood prevention and the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water may be carried out; the projects may include, but shall not be limited to, engineering operations, methods of cultivation and variations in land use;

D. assist, contract with and render financial aid to district landowners and state or federal agencies administering land within the district that are engaged in erosion control and prevention projects, flood prevention works or the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water within the district;

E. make available to district landowners, on such terms as the supervisors may prescribe, tools, machinery, equipment, fertilizer, seeds and other materials to assist the landowners in initiating and developing natural resource conservation and development projects;

F. develop comprehensive plans for natural resource conservation, development and utilization, including flood prevention, control and prevention of soil erosion and the development, utilization and disposal of water; the plans shall be detailed and shall specify as completely as possible the necessary or desirable acts, procedures, performances and avoidances to implement the plan, including engineering specifications, methods of cultivation, cropping programs, tilling practices and land use changes;

G. foster, publish and promote district natural resource development plans and their adoption and development by landowners within the district;

H. acquire or administer the project of any other governmental agency undertaken to provide for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources within the district;

I. act as agent for any instrumentality or agency of the state or of the federal government in the acquisition, construction, operation or administration of a natural resource conservation, utilization or development project or program within the district; and

J. construct, improve, operate or maintain physical projects and structures necessary or convenient for the performance of any authorized district function.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-59, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 18; 2003, ch. 88, § 16.

### **73-20-45. Specific powers of districts.**

A district, by and through its supervisors, is authorized to:

A. sue and be sued in the name of the district;

B. adopt an official seal;

C. contract, convey and make and execute other instruments and documents necessary or convenient to the exercise of district powers;

D. borrow money and otherwise contract indebtedness for the purposes of the district and, without limitation of the generality of the foregoing, borrow money and accept grants from the United States or from a corporation or agency created or designated by the United States and, in connection with any such loan or grant, enter into agreements as the United States or the corporation or agency may require; and issue its notes or obligations therefor and secure the payment thereof by mortgage, pledge or deed of trust of all or any of its property, assets, rights, privileges, licenses, rights-of-way, easements, revenues or income;

E. option, as optionee and optioner, and acquire, in any manner, real and personal property or any right or interest in it;

F. improve, rent, lease and sell district property or any interest in it;

G. receive, invest and reinvest rents and income from district property and expend rents and income for district purposes; and

H. accept contributions, gifts and donations and expend and utilize them to further district purposes.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-60, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 19; 2003, ch. 88, § 17.

### **73-20-46. District assessments.**

A. In the event a district is unable to meet or bear the expense of the duties imposed upon it by the Soil and Water Conservation District Act, the supervisors may adopt a resolution that, to be effective, shall be approved by referendum in the district and that shall provide for an annual levy in a stated amount not exceeding five dollars (\$5.00) on each one thousand dollars (\$1,000) of net taxable value, as that term is defined in the Property Tax Code [Articles 35 to 38 of Chapter 7 NMSA 1978], of real property within the district, except that real property within incorporated cities and towns in the district may be excluded. The referendum held to approve or reject the resolution of the supervisors shall be conducted pursuant to the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978]. After the initial authorization is approved by referendum, the supervisors shall adopt a resolution in each following year authorizing the levy.

B. A resolution authorized under Subsection A of this section shall not be effective, and neither a referendum nor a levy is authorized, unless the resolution is submitted to and approved in writing by the commission.

C. In the event a resolution of the supervisors is adopted and approved in accordance with the provisions of Subsection A of this section, the supervisors of the district shall certify by the fifteenth of July of each year to the county assessor of each county in which there is situate land subject to the district assessment:

- (1) a copy of the resolution of the supervisors;
  - (2) the results of any referendum held in the year the certification is made;
- and
- (3) a list of landowners of the district and a description of the land owned by each that is subject to assessment.

D. A county assessor shall indicate the information on the tax schedules, compute the assessment and present the district assessment by regular tax bill.

E. The district assessment shall be collected by the county treasurer of each county in which taxable district land is situate in the same manner and at the same time that county ad valorem taxes are levied. The conditions, penalties and rates of interest applicable to county ad valorem taxation apply to the levy and collection of district assessments. A county treasurer shall be entitled to a collection fee equal to the actual costs of collection or four percent of the money collected from the levy of the district assessment, whichever is the lesser.

F. District funds, regardless of origin, shall be transferred to and held by the supervisors and shall be expended for district obligations and functions. The supervisors shall prepare an annual budget and submit it for approval to the commission and to the local government division of the department of finance and administration. All district funds shall be expended in accordance with the approved budgets.

G. In the event the supervisors of a district determine that there are or will be sufficient funds available for the operation of the district for any year for which an assessment is to be levied, they shall, by resolution, direct the assessor of each county in which taxable district land is situate, by July 15 of each year, to decrease the district assessment or to delete the district assessment reflected on the tax schedules.

H. Any levy authorized by the Soil and Water Conservation District Act, and any loan or other indebtedness authorized by that act that will require a levy, shall be based exclusively on or levied exclusively on the real property in the district, except that real property within incorporated cities and towns may be excluded.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-61, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 20; 1969, ch. 164, § 1; 1977, ch. 254, § 73; 1986, ch. 32, § 39; 1989, ch. 21, § 1; 1989, ch. 273, § 1; 1999, ch. 42, § 1; 2003, ch. 88, § 18; 2009, ch. 204, § 2; 2018, ch. 79, § 169.

### **73-20-46.1. Assessments; limitations.**

A levy approved by the voters of a district and authorized by the commission pursuant to Section 73-20-46 NMSA 1978 prior to July 1, 2018 shall continue to be assessed pursuant to the laws in effect at the time the levy was initially approved; provided that the aggregate of all levies in a district approved prior to July 1, 2018 that continue in effect and any levies in the same district approved on or after July 1, 2018 shall not exceed the maximum allowable levy in a district pursuant to Subsection A of Section 73-20-46 NMSA 1978.

**History:** Laws 2019, ch. 212, § 258.

### **73-20-47. Cooperation between districts.**

The supervisors of two or more soil and water conservation districts may cooperate with each other in the exercise of any district power.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-62, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 21.

### **73-20-48. State agencies to cooperate.**

Agencies, instrumentalities and political subdivisions of this state having jurisdiction over or charged with the administration of public lands situate within the defined geographical area of any district shall cooperate to the fullest extent with the district's supervisors in effectuating district projects and programs. Supervisors shall have free access to enter and perform work upon state public lands lying within their districts; provided, however, supervisors shall not have unqualified access to state public lands that are subject to private dominion under lease or that are developed for, or devoted to, another public use. County clerks of the counties within which all or a part of the district lands are located shall provide advice and assistance with conduct of elections and referenda.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-63, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 22; 2003, ch. 88, § 19.

### **73-20-49. Repealed.**

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-5-64, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 23; 1977, ch. 254, § 74; 1997, ch. 137, § 10; repealed by Laws 2003, ch. 88, § 20.

## **ARTICLE 21**

## **Water and Sanitation Districts**

### **73-21-1. [Declaration of purpose.]**

It is hereby declared that the organization of water and sanitation districts, having the purposes and powers provided in this act, will serve a public use and will promote the health, safety, prosperity, security and general welfare of the inhabitants of said districts.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3401, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-1.

### **73-21-2. Short title.**

Chapter 73, Article 21 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Water and Sanitation District Act".



**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-1.1, enacted by Laws 1977, ch. 345, § 1; 2005, ch. 167, § 1.

### **73-21-3. Purpose of water and sanitation districts.**

Water and sanitation districts may be created for the purpose of:

A. purchasing, acquiring, establishing or constructing waterworks to supply water for domestic, commercial and industrial purposes by any available means to persons within and without the boundaries of the district. For this purpose, any district has the power to extend its water lines outside the boundaries of the district for the purpose of securing a source of water supply or for the purpose of supplying the water to any lands of the United States, New Mexico or Indian reservations for use by any person, firm or corporation;

B. purchasing, acquiring, establishing or constructing sanitary sewers or a system of sewage disposal, garbage or refuse disposal;

C. purchasing, acquiring, establishing or constructing streets and street improvements, including without limitation grades, regrades, gravel, oiling, surfacing, macadamizing, paving, crosswalks, sidewalks, driveway approaches, curbs, gutters, culverts, drains, sewers, manholes, inlets, outlets, retaining walls, bridges, overpasses, tunnels, underpasses, approaches, artificial lights and lighting equipment, parkways, grade separators, traffic separators and traffic-control equipment and all appurtenances and incidentals or any combination of them, including real and other property for them;

D. establishing or constructing park and recreational improvements;

E. purchasing, acquiring, establishing, constructing or operating other public facilities or economic development projects; or

F. all of the improvements in Subsections A through E of this section or any combination of them within or without the district.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3402, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-2; Laws 1963, ch. 261, § 1; 1975, ch. 219, § 1; 1977, ch. 345, § 2;; 2005, ch. 167, § 2.

### **73-21-4. Definitions.**

As used in the Water and Sanitation District Act:

A. "board" means the board of directors of a district;

B. "district" means a water and sanitation district that is established pursuant to the Water and Sanitation District Act and that is either entirely within or partly within and

partly without one or more counties; provided those parts or parcels of the district lying in two or more counties are contiguous with one another, and further provided, a district created pursuant to a petition signed by the board of county commissioners of a county shall be entirely within that county;

C. "fee-for-service system" means a garbage or refuse collection system established by a district to fully implement the purposes for which the district is created and for which a service is offered, a fee is established by the board and the fee is paid by the customers of the district;

D. "proponents and opponents" means residents or nonresidents of a district who pay or are liable for paying rates, tolls, fees and charges assessed by that district;

E. "publication" means giving notice once a week for three consecutive weeks in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the county in which all or the major portion of the district is located; however, it is not necessary that publication be made on the same day of the week in each of the three weeks, but not less than fourteen days, excluding the day of first publication, shall intervene between the first publication and the last publication, and publication shall be complete on the date of the last publication;

F. "sewage system" includes all constructions for collection, transportation, pumping, treatment and final disposition of sewage; and

G. "utility" means a water system, sewer system or other fee-for-service system implemented by the district.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3403, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 3; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-3; Laws 1963, ch. 261, § 2; 1977, ch. 345, § 3; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-4, 1985, ch. 155, § 1; 2003, ch. 116, § 1; 2005, ch. 167, § 3; 2009, ch. 241, § 2; 2019, ch. 212, § 259.

### **73-21-5. Organization of district.**

Subject to the procedures set forth in the Special District Procedures Act [Chapter 4, Article 53 NMSA 1978], where applicable, the district court sitting in and for any county in this state may establish districts which may be entirely within or partly within and partly without the judicial district in which the court is located; provided, any part or parcels of the district lying in two or more counties shall be contiguous with one another.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3404, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 4; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-4; Laws 1977, ch. 345, § 4.

### **73-21-6. Petition.**

A. The organization of a district shall be initiated by a petition filed in the office of the clerk of the court vested with jurisdiction in a county in which all or part of the real

property in the proposed district is situated. The petition shall be signed by not less than twenty-five percent of the qualified electors of the district, none of whom shall be an officer, director or shareholder of any business entity with an economic interest in the subdivision and sale of land within the district; provided that at the option of a county and, after adoption of a resolution by the county authorizing the filing of a petition, that county may file a petition that shall be signed by the chair of the board of county commissioners. The petition and all other instruments relating to the formation of such districts shall be filed in the office of the county clerk of the county or counties in which the proposed district is located.

B. The petition shall set forth:

(1) the name of the proposed district consisting of a chosen name preceding the words "water and sanitation district";

(2) a general description of the improvements to be constructed or installed within and for the district;

(3) the estimated overall cost of the proposed improvements to be constructed or installed within and for the district;

(4) an estimated time table for the completion of all intended improvements;

(5) the need for the creation of the district and the construction or installation of improvements, stating the nature and extent of the anticipated use of the improvements by persons presently residing on land within the district and the nature and extent of the anticipated use of the improvements due to future development;

(6) a general description of the boundaries of the district or the territory to be included in it, with such certainty as to enable a property owner to determine whether or not the owner's property is within the district;

(7) the salary, if any, that the members of the board shall receive for their services; and

(8) a request for the organization of the district.

C. No petition with the requisite signatures shall be declared void on account of alleged defects, but the court may at any time permit the petition to be amended to conform to the facts by correcting any errors in the description of the territory or in any other particular. Similar petitions or duplicate copies of the same petition for the organization of the same district may be filed and shall together be regarded as one petition.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3405, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 5; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-5; Laws 1977, ch. 345, § 5; 1985, ch. 155, § 2; 2019, ch. 212, § 260.

### **73-21-7. Bond of petitioners.**

At the time of filing the petition or at any time subsequent to it and prior to the time of hearing on the petition, a bond shall be filed, with security approved by the court, sufficient to pay all expenses connected with the proceedings in case the organization of the district is not effected, provided that no bond shall be required in connection with a petition signed by the chairman of the board of county commissioners of a county after adoption of a resolution authorizing the filing of such petition. If at any time during the proceeding, the court is satisfied that the bond first executed is insufficient in amount, it may require the execution of an additional bond within a time to be fixed in not less than ten days, and upon failure of the petitioner to execute the additional bond, the petition shall be dismissed.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3406, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 6; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-6; Laws 1985, ch. 155, § 3.

### **73-21-8. Notice of hearing on petition.**

Upon approval of the county special district commission as provided in the Special District Procedures Act [Chapter 4, Article 53 NMSA 1978], where applicable, the court shall fix a place and time, not less than twenty days nor more than forty days after receipt of the decision of the county special district commission, for hearing thereon and thereupon the clerk of the court shall cause notice by publication to be made of the pendency of the petition and of the time and place of hearing thereon; the clerk of the court shall also forthwith cause a copy of the notice to be mailed by United States registered mail to the board of county commissioners of each of the several counties, and shall notify the attorney general and the health and social services department of the hearing to be held for the creation of the district by mailing notice addressed to the same, such notice to be deposited in the mail not less than ten days prior to the date set for the hearing, and the attorney general and the health and social services department may appear and be heard at the hearings.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3407, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 7; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-7; Laws 1977, ch. 345, § 6.

### **73-21-9. Hearing on petitions; election for organization and officers.**

A. At any time after the filing of the petition for the organization of a district and before the day fixed for the hearing on it, the owner of any taxable property within the proposed district may file a petition with the court stating reasons why the property should not be included in the district and requesting that the property be excluded from it. The petition shall be verified and shall describe the property sought to be excluded. The court shall hear the petition and all objections to it at the time of the hearing on the petition for organization and shall determine whether the property should be excluded or included in the district.

B. In determining whether or not the petition for the creation of a water and sanitation district shall be granted, the district court shall consult and request an opinion from:

- (1) the state engineer to determine whether the proposed district has adequate water rights to implement the proposed improvements; and
- (2) the environmental improvement division of the department of environment to determine, as to the technological feasibility of the proposed improvements, whether the water proposed to be supplied is of an acceptable quality to conform with the state regulations and whether the liquid and solid waste disposal proposals can conform with state regulations.

C. The court may deny the petition or may order the petition to be modified if the court, after hearing on the petition, finds that:

- (1) the proposed water and sewage improvements cannot conform with the state regulations;
- (2) the water and sewage improvements cannot be implemented within a reasonable time taking into consideration applications for state and federal grants;
- (3) there is lacking an actual or impending need for the water and sewage improvements proposed; or
- (4) the boundaries of the proposed district contain land that has no actual or impending need for the water and sewage improvements or cannot be reasonably expected to utilize the water and sewage improvements, unless the land is otherwise required to be included in the proposed district by rule or regulation of a federal agency.

D. Upon the hearing, if it appears that a petition for the organization of a district has been properly signed and presented and that the allegations of the petition are true, the court shall order that the question of the organization of the district be submitted to the qualified electors of the district as set forth in the petition, as the boundaries were modified by the court in determining that only property to be benefited by the proposed improvements should be included within the boundaries of the district, at an election to be held for that purpose and conducted pursuant to the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978]. The election shall be held in the district not less than ninety days after the order is entered in accordance with the Local Election Act; provided that the date does not conflict with the provisions of Section 1-24-1 NMSA 1978.

E. At the election, the qualified electors of the district shall vote for or against the organization of the district. If a majority of the votes cast at the election are in favor of the organization, the district court shall declare the district organized and give it a corporate name by which in all proceedings it shall thereafter be known. Thereupon the

district shall be a governmental subdivision of the state, except a district created pursuant to a petition signed by the chair of the board of county commissioners of a county, which district shall be a subdivision of the county. Every district shall be a body corporate with all the powers of a public or quasi-municipal corporation.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3408, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 8; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-8; Laws 1963, ch. 261, § 3; 1977, ch. 345, § 7; 1985, ch. 155, § 4; 2005, ch. 167, § 4; 2019, ch. 212, § 261.

### **73-21-10. Filing decree.**

Within thirty days after the said district has been declared a corporation by the court, the clerk of the court shall transmit to the county clerk and recorder in each of the counties in which the district or a part thereof may be or extend, copies of the findings and the decree of the court incorporating said district. The same shall be filed in the same manner as articles of incorporation are now required to be filed under the general laws concerning corporations; and the clerk and recorder in each county shall receive a fee of one dollar (\$1.00) for filing and preserving the same.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3409, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 9; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-9.

### **73-21-11. [Board of directors; qualification; bond.]**

Whenever a district has been declared duly organized, the members of the board shall qualify by filing with the clerk of court their oaths of office, and corporate surety bonds at the expense of the district in an amount not to exceed \$1,000 each, the form thereof to be fixed and approved by the court, conditioned for the faithful performance of their duties as directors.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3410, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 10; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-10.

### **73-21-12. Organization of board; meetings; vacancies; election of officers[; removal of directors].**

After taking oath and filing bonds, the board shall choose one of its members as chairman of the board and president of the district, and shall elect a secretary and a treasurer of the board and of the district, who may or may not be members of the board. The secretary and treasurer may be one person. Such board shall adopt a seal and the secretary shall keep, in a well-bound book, a record of all of its proceedings, minutes of all meetings, certificates, contracts, bonds given by employees and all corporate acts which shall be open to inspection of all owners of real property in the district, as well as to all other interested parties.

The treasurer shall keep strict and accurate accounts of all money received by and disbursed for and on behalf of the district, in permanent records. He shall file with the clerk of court, at the expense of the district, a corporate fidelity bond in an amount not less than \$5,000, conditioned on the faithful performance of the duties of his office.

The members of the board shall serve without compensation unless otherwise provided by the petition and order creating the district. Members shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses incurred in performance of their duties.

The court having jurisdiction of the district shall have the power to remove directors for cause shown, on petition, notice and hearing.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3411, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 11; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-11.

### **73-21-13. Meetings.**

The board shall meet once each month at a time and place to be designated by the board. Special meetings may be held as often as the needs of the district require on notice to each member of the board. A majority of the board shall constitute a quorum at any meeting. Any vacancy on a board elected by qualified electors of the district shall be filled by the remaining members or member of the board, the appointee to act until the next biennial election when the vacancy shall be filled by election. Any vacancy on a board appointed by a board of county commissioners shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments, in accordance with Section 73-21-15.1 NMSA 1978, the appointee to act until the end of the term of the member creating the vacancy. If the board or a board of county commissioners fails to fill any vacancy within thirty days after it occurs, the court having jurisdiction shall fill the vacancy.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3412, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 12; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-12; Laws 1977, ch. 326, § 1; 1985, ch. 155, § 5; 2019, ch. 212, § 262.

### **73-21-14. Elections.**

A. In any district, except a district created pursuant to a petition signed by the chair of the board of county commissioners of a county, in accordance with the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978] there shall be elected by the qualified electors of the district one member of the board to serve for a term of six years, except that if the district elects to adopt four-year terms, the member shall serve for a term of four years.

B. In any district created pursuant to a petition signed by the chair of the board of county commissioners of a county, in the odd-numbered year after the organization of the district and every second year thereafter, there shall be elected by the qualified electors of the district at least two, but no more than three, members of the board to serve for a term of two years. The election shall be held in accordance with the provisions of the Local Election Act.

C. Nominations may be filed with the proper filing officer in accordance with the provisions of the Local Election Act. If within ninety days prior to a board election the district publishes materials that describe the qualifications, experience and accomplishments of incumbents, equal space shall be made available without charge for similar information provided by opponents seeking a position on the board.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3413, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 13; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-13; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-14, Laws 1984, ch. 14, § 1; 1985, ch. 155, § 6; 2009, ch. 241, § 3; 2018, ch. 79, § 170.

### **73-21-15. Board increase; appointed members.**

A. In every district, three members of the board shall be elected by the qualified electors pursuant to the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978].

B. In those districts that have five board members, the board may by resolution designate two board members to serve by appointment. In those districts that have three board members, the board may by resolution expand the board to include two appointed board members. A resolution adopted pursuant to this subsection shall not be rescinded until two regular local elections have passed after adoption of the resolution.

C. The appointment of board members serving pursuant to a resolution adopted pursuant to Subsection B of this section shall be for a term of two years beginning July 1 of each even-numbered year and ending June 30 of the following even-numbered year. Appointed members of the board are not required to be qualified electors nor residents of the district.

D. Appointed board members are authorized to vote on all matters except for a tax or assessment of any kind proposed or approved pursuant to authority granted by Article 8, Section 9 of the constitution of New Mexico, which is limited to a vote of the elected members only.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-13.1, enacted by Laws 1977, ch. 326, § 2; 1981, ch. 35, § 1; 1984, ch. 14, § 2; 1985, ch. 155, § 7; 1978 Comp., 73-21-15, repealed and reenacted by Laws 2019, ch. 212, § 263.

#### **73-21-15.1. Appointment of first board.**

Members of the first board of any district shall be appointed by the board of county commissioners. In a district consisting of multiple counties, the district judge shall designate how many members of the board will be appointed by each board of county commissioners. The first board shall consist of five directors who are qualified electors of the district appointed for staggered terms so that the terms of two directors expire within two years and the terms of three directors expire within four years. Thereafter, all



directors shall be elected to terms of office pursuant to the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act. Any director appointed by any board of county commissioners shall be eligible for election; provided that no member of a board shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

**History:** 1978 Comp., § 73-21-15.1, enacted by Laws 1985, ch. 155, § 8; 2005, ch. 167, § 5; 2019, ch. 212, § 264.

### **73-21-16. General powers.**

For and on behalf of the district, the board shall have the following powers:

- A. to have perpetual existence;
- B. to have and use a corporate seal;
- C. to sue and be sued and be a party to suits, actions and proceedings;
- D. except as otherwise provided in the Water and Sanitation District Act to enter into contracts and agreements affecting the affairs of the district, including contracts with the United States and any of its agencies or instrumentalities. Except in cases in which a district will receive aid from a governmental agency, a notice shall be published for bids on all construction contracts for work or material or both involving an expense of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or more. The district may reject any and all bids, and, if it appears that the district can perform the work or secure material for less than the lowest bid, it may proceed to do so;
- E. to borrow money and incur indebtedness and evidence the indebtedness by certificates, notes or debentures and to issue bonds in accordance with the provisions of that act;
- F. to acquire, dispose of and encumber real and personal property, water rights, water and sewer works and plants and any interest in them, including leases and easements;
- G. to refund any bonded indebtedness or revenue bonds of the district without an election in accordance with the provisions of that act;
- H. to have the management, control and supervision of all the business and affairs of the district and the construction, installation, operation and maintenance of district improvements;
- I. to hire and retain agents, employees, engineers and attorneys;
- J. to have and exercise the power of eminent domain and dominant eminent domain and, in the manner provided by law for the condemnation of private property for

public use, to take any property necessary to the exercise of the powers granted in that act, both within and without the district;

K. to construct and maintain works and establish and maintain facilities across or along any public street or highway and in, upon or over any vacant public lands, which public lands are now or may become the property of the state, and to construct works and establish and maintain facilities across any stream of water or watercourse; provided, however, that the district shall promptly restore any such street or highway to its former state of usefulness as nearly as may be and shall not use the street or highway in such manner as to completely or unnecessarily impair its usefulness;

L. to fix and from time to time to increase or decrease water and sewer rates, tolls or charges for services or facilities furnished or made available by the district, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, standby charges for both water and sewers, and to pledge that revenue for the payment of any indebtedness of the district. Until paid, all rates, tolls or charges constitute a perpetual lien on and against the property served, and any such lien may be foreclosed in the same manner as provided by the laws of New Mexico for the foreclosure of real estate mortgages. The board shall shut off or discontinue service for delinquencies in the payment of the rates, tolls or charges or in the payment of taxes levied pursuant to the Water and Sanitation District Act and prescribe and enforce rules and regulations for the connection with and the disconnection from properties of the facilities of the district. For health and sanitary purposes, the board shall have the power to compel the owners of inhabited property within a sanitation district to connect their property with the sewer system of the district, and, upon a failure so to connect within sixty days after written notice by the board, the board may cause the connection to be made and a lien to be filed against the property for the expense incurred in making the connection; provided, however, that no owner shall be compelled to connect his property with such system unless a service line is brought by the district to a point within four hundred feet of his dwelling place;

M. to adopt and amend bylaws not in conflict with the constitution and laws of the state for carrying on the business, objects and affairs of the board and of the district; and

N. to have and exercise all rights and powers necessary or incidental to or implied from the specific powers granted in this section. Such specific powers shall not be considered as a limitation upon any power necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes and intent of that act.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3414, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 14; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-14; Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 1; 1985, ch. 166, § 1.

## **73-21-17. Taxes.**

In addition to the other means of providing revenue for such districts as herein provided, the board shall have power and authority to levy and collect ad valorem taxes on and against all taxable property within the district.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3415, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 15; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-15.

### **73-21-18. Levy and collection of taxes.**

To levy and collect taxes, the board shall, in each year, determine the amount of money necessary to be raised by taxation, taking into consideration other sources of revenue of the district, and shall fix a rate of levy which, when levied upon every dollar of assessed valuation of taxable property within the district, and with other revenues will raise the amount required by the district annually, to supply funds for paying expenses of organization and the costs of construction [constructing], operating and maintaining the works and equipment of the district, and promptly to pay in full, when due, all interest on and principal of bonds and other obligations of the district, and in the event of accruing defaults or deficiencies, an additional levy may be made as provided in Section 73-21-19 NMSA 1978. The board shall, on or before October 1 of each year, certify to the board of county commissioners of each county within the district, or having a portion of its territory within the district, the rate so fixed with directions that at the time and in the manner required by law for levying of taxes for county purposes, the board of county commissioners shall levy the tax upon [the] assessed valuation of all taxable property within the district, in addition to other taxes as may be levied by the board of county commissioners at the rate so fixed and determined.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3416, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 16; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-16; Laws 1963, ch. 261, § 4.

### **73-21-19. Levies to cover defaults and deficiencies.**

The board in certifying annual levies as herein provided, shall take into account the maturing indebtedness for the ensuing year as provided in its contracts, maturing bonds and interest on bonds, and deficiencies and defaults of prior years, and shall make ample provision for the payment thereof. In case the moneys produced from such levies, together with other revenues of the district, are not sufficient punctually to pay the annual installments on its contracts or bonds, and interest thereon, and to pay defaults and deficiencies, then the board shall make such additional levies of taxes as may be necessary for such purposes, and notwithstanding any limitations, such taxes shall be made and continue to be levied until the indebtedness of the district shall be fully paid.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3417, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 17; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-17.

### **73-21-20. Officers levy and collect taxes.**

It shall be the duty of the body having authority to levy taxes within each county, to levy taxes provided in this act and it shall be the duty of all officials charged with the duty of collecting taxes to collect such taxes at the time and in the form and manner and with like interest and penalties as other taxes are collected and when collected to pay the same to the districts ordering its levy and collection, and the payment of such collections shall be made monthly to the treasurer of the district and paid into the depository thereof to the credit of the district. All taxes levied under this act, together with interest thereon and penalties for default in payment thereof, and all costs of collecting the same, shall, until paid, constitute a perpetual lien on and against the property taxed, and such lien shall be on a parity with the tax lien of general taxes.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3418, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 18; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-18.

### **73-21-21. Sale for delinquencies; purchase by district.**

If the taxes levied are not paid as herein provided, then delinquent real property shall be sold at the regular tax sale for the payment of the taxes, interest and penalties, in the manner provided by law for selling property for the nonpayment of general taxes. The board of directors may purchase, in the name of the district, any property which may be sold for delinquent taxes within the boundaries of the district and the board may take title to the lands in the name of the district and sell and convey the lands at a price not less than the taxes, penalty and interest accrued thereon. Delinquent personal property shall be distrained and sold as provided by law.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3419, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 19; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-19; Laws 1963, ch. 261, § 5.

### **73-21-22. Sinking fund.**

Whenever any indebtedness has been incurred by a district, it shall be lawful for the board to levy taxes and collect revenue for the purpose of creating a reserve fund in such amount as the board may determine, which may be used to meet the obligations of the district, for maintenance and operating charges and depreciation, and provide extensions of and betterments to the improvements of the district.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3420, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 20; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-20.

### **73-21-23. Inclusion [of additional property].**

The boundaries of any district organized under the provisions of this act may be changed in the manner herein prescribed, but the change of boundaries of the district shall not impair or affect its organization or its rights in or to property, or any of its rights or privileges whatsoever; nor shall it affect or impair or discharge any contract, obligation, lien or charge for or upon which it might be liable or chargeable had any such

change of boundaries not been made. The owners of real property may file with the board a petition, in writing, praying that such real property be included in the district. The petition shall prescribe the property owned by the petitioners, and such petition shall be deemed to give assent of the petitioners to the inclusion in said district of the property described in the petition, and such petition must be acknowledged in the same manner that conveyances of land are required to be acknowledged. The secretary of the board shall cause notice of filing of such petition to be given and published in the county in which the property is situated, which notice shall state the filing of such petition, names of petitioners, descriptions of lands mentioned and the prayer of said petitioners; giving notice to all persons interested to appear at the office of the board at the time named in said notice and show cause in writing, if any they have, why the petition should not be granted. The board shall at the time and place mentioned or at such time or times at which the hearing may be adjourned, proceed to hear the petition and all objections thereto, presented, in writing, by any person showing cause why said petition should not be granted. The failure of any person interested to show cause in writing shall be deemed and held and taken as an assent on his part to the inclusion of such lands in the district as prayed for in the petition. If the petition is granted, the board shall make an order to that effect and file same with the clerk of the court and upon order of the court said property shall be included in the district.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3421, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 21; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-21.

### **73-21-24. Exclusion [from district].**

The owner or owners in fee of any real property constituting a portion of the district may file with the board a petition praying that such lands be excluded and taken from said district. Petition shall describe the property which the petitioners desire to have excluded. Such petition must be acknowledged in the same manner and form as required in case of a conveyance of land and be accompanied by a deposit of money sufficient to pay all costs of the exclusion proceedings. The secretary of the board shall cause a notice of filing of such petition to be published in the county in which said property or the major portion thereof, is located. The notice shall state the filing of such petition, the names of petitioners, description of the property mentioned in said petition and the prayer of said petitioners; and it shall notify all persons interested to appear at the office of said board at the time named in said notice, showing cause in writing, if any they have, why said petition should not be granted. The board at the time and place mentioned in the notice, or at the time or times at which the hearing of said petition may be adjourned, shall proceed to hear the petition and all objections thereto, presented in writing by any person showing cause as aforesaid, why the prayer of the petition should not be granted. The filing of such petition shall be deemed and taken as an assent by each and all such petitioners to the exclusion from the district of the property mentioned in the petition, or any part thereof. The board, if it deems it not for the best interests of the district that the property mentioned in the petition, or portion thereof, shall be excluded from the district, shall order that said petition be denied; but if it deems it for the best interest of the district that the property mentioned in the petition, or some

portion thereof, be excluded from the district, then the board may order the property mentioned in the petition or some portion thereof, excluded from the district. Upon allowance of such petition, the board shall file a certified copy of the order of the board making such change with the clerk of the court and upon order of the court said property shall be excluded from the district.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3422, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 22; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-22.

### **73-21-25. Liability of property included or excluded.**

All taxable property annexed to a district shall thereafter be subject to the levy of taxes for the payment of any indebtedness of the district outstanding at the time of the annexation. Real property excluded from a district shall thereafter be subject to the levy of taxes for the payment of any indebtedness of the district outstanding at the time of its exclusion in the same manner and to the same extent as if such property had not been excluded from the district.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3423, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 23; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-23; Laws 1963, ch. 261, § 6.

### **73-21-26. Bonds; interest; form.**

To carry out the purposes of the Water and Sanitation District Act, the board may issue bonds of the district upon approval of the majority of the qualified electors of the district voting on the question pursuant to the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978]. Bonds shall bear interest payable semiannually and shall be due and payable serially, either annually or semiannually, commencing not later than three years and extending not more than twenty years from date. The form and terms of the bonds, including provisions for their payment and redemption, shall be determined by the board. If the board so determines, the bonds may be redeemable prior to maturity upon payment of a premium, not exceeding three percent of the principal thereof. The bonds, except for bonds issued in book entry or similar form without the delivery of physical securities, shall be executed in the name of and on behalf of the district and signed by the chair of the board, with the seal of the district affixed thereto, and attested to by the secretary of the board. The bonds shall be sold and shall be in such denominations as the board determines, and the bonds and the attached coupons, if any, shall be payable to the bearer or registered as to principal or as to principal and interest. Interest coupons, if any, shall bear the original or facsimile signature of the chair of the board.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3424, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 24; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-24; Laws 1963, ch. 261, § 7; 1977, ch. 345, § 8; 1983, ch. 265, § 61; 2019, ch. 212, § 265.

### **73-21-27. Community Service District Act provisions apply.**

With respect to the issuance of any negotiable securities representing an indebtedness of the water and sanitation district, the provisions and procedures set forth in the Community Service District Act [Chapter 4, Article 54 NMSA 1978] shall apply.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-24.1, enacted by Laws 1977, ch. 345, § 9.

### **73-21-28. Board resolution; indebtedness; election.**

Whenever the board shall, by resolution, determine that the interest of the district and the public interest or necessity demand the acquisition, construction, installation or completion of any works or other improvements or facilities, or the making of any contract with the United States or other persons or corporations, to carry out the objects or purposes of the district, requiring the creation of a general obligation indebtedness of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or more, secured by property tax revenue from within the district, the board shall order the submission of the proposition of issuing the obligations or bonds or creating other indebtedness to the qualified electors of the district at a district election held in accordance with the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978]. The declaration of public interest or necessity required in this section and the provision for the holding of the election may be included within one and the same resolution. The resolution, in addition to the declaration of public interest or necessity, shall recite the objects and purposes for which the indebtedness is proposed to be incurred, the estimated cost of the works or improvements, as the case may be, the amount of principal of the indebtedness to be incurred and the maximum rate of interest to be paid on the indebtedness. The resolution shall also announce the date upon which the election shall be held; provided that the date is not in conflict with the provisions of Section 1-24-1 NMSA 1978.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3425, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 25; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-25; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-28; 2009, ch. 241, § 4; 2018, ch. 79, § 171; 2019, ch. 212, § 266.

### **73-21-29. Repealed.**

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3426, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 26; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-26; repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 175.

### **73-21-30. Repealed.**

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3427, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 27; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-27; repealed by Laws 2018, ch. 79, § 175.

### **73-21-31. Effect of election; subsequent elections.**

In the event that it appears from the returns that a majority of the qualified electors of the district have voted in favor of the ballot question, the district shall then be authorized

to incur the indebtedness or the obligations, enter into the contract or issue and sell the bonds of the district, as the case may be, for the purpose and object provided for in the proposition submitted under the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act and in the resolution for them and in the amount so provided and at a rate of interest not exceeding the rate of interest recited in the resolution. Submission of the proposition of incurring such obligations or bonded or other indebtedness at an election shall not prevent or prohibit submission of it or other propositions at subsequent elections called for that purpose.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3428, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 28; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-28; 2019, ch. 212, § 267.

### **73-21-32. Correction of faulty notices.**

In any and every case where a notice is provided for in this act, if the court finds any reason that due notice was not given, the court shall not thereby lose jurisdiction, and the proceeding in question shall not thereby be void or be abated, but the court shall in that case order due notice to be given, and shall continue the hearing until such time as notice shall be properly given, and thereupon shall proceed as though notice has [had] been properly given in the first instance.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3429, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 29; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-29.

### **73-21-33. Early hearings.**

All cases in which there may arise a question of the validity of the organization of a district, or a question of the validity of any proceeding under this act shall be advanced as a matter of immediate public interest and concern, and heard at the earliest practicable moment. The courts shall be open at all times for the purposes of this act.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3430, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 30; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-30.

### **73-21-34. Liberal construction.**

This act being necessary to secure and preserve the public health, safety, convenience and welfare, it shall be liberally construed to effect its purposes.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3431, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 31; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-31.

### **73-21-35. Character of act.**



No part of this act shall repeal or affect any other act or any part thereof, it being intended that this act shall provide a separate method of accomplishing its objects, and not an exclusive one.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3432, enacted by Laws 1943, ch. 80, § 33; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-32.

### **73-21-36. Acquisition, construction or improvement of systems; joint revenue bonds.**

A. Whenever the board of a district shall, by resolution, determine that interest or necessity requires the acquisition, construction, repair, extension, improvement or betterment of a water system, sewer system or other fee-for-service system, districts are authorized to issue revenue bonds or obtain loans, payable solely out of the net income, to be derived from the operation of a publicly owned water system or sewer system or from services rendered by the district for a fee, and to pledge, irrevocably, the income to the payment of the bonds.

B. The proceeds of the bonds are to be used solely for the purchasing, acquiring, constructing and making of necessary improvements, extensions, repairs and betterments of the water system, sewer system or other fee-for-service system for the purchase and acquiring of wells, cisterns, reservoirs or other sources of water supply and pumping plants, sewage disposal plants or other machinery necessary for the operation of those facilities and the land and real estate upon which those facilities are situated or to be situated.

C. Joint revenue bonds may be issued for the acquisition, construction, extension, enlargement or betterment of a joint water system and joint sewer system or other joint fee-for-service system and the income of one or more of the utilities may be pledged to secure the repayment of the joint bonds.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3433, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 195, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-33; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-36; 2009, ch. 241, § 5.

### **73-21-37. Interest; maturity; form; method of sale.**

A. Revenue bonds issued under the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act shall bear interest at not to exceed six percent per year, payable annually or semiannually, shall be payable at the option of the district, at the end of ten years from the date thereof; and due by their terms in not more than twenty years from date hereof; as determined by the district, shall be serial in form and maturity and numbered from one upward, consecutively, or may consist of one bond payable, at one time or in installments, and shall be sold for cash, at not less than par, and at either public or private sale.

B. All prior revenue bond issues of districts where one bond was issued in lieu of multiple bonds are validated.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3434, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 195, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-34; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-37; Laws 1980, ch. 79, § 1; 2009, ch. 241, § 6.

### **73-21-38. Revenue bond issuance.**

The board of a district issuing revenue bonds under the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act may authorize the issuance of the bonds by resolution adopted by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members of the board at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose. At the meeting, the necessity of the issuance of the revenue bonds shall be declared and, when issued, shall be signed by the president of the board and attested by its secretary, with the seal of the district affixed to the bonds.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3435, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 195, § 3; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-35; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-38; 2009, ch. 241, § 7.

### **73-21-39. Bonds collectible from operating revenues.**

It is declared that revenue bonds, issued under the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act, except for those general obligation bonds described in Section 73-21-43 NMSA 1978, shall not be considered to be general obligations of the district issuing them and shall be collectible only out of the net revenues derived from the operation of the water or sewer system, or joint water and sewer systems or from services rendered by the district for a fee, whose income is so pledged. Each of the bonds of any issue of revenue bonds issued under the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act, with the exception of general obligation bonds, shall recite on its face that it is payable and collectible solely from the revenues derived from the operations of the water or sewer system or joint water and sewer system or from the services rendered by the district for a fee, the income of which is so pledged, and that the holders of the bonds shall not look to any general or other fund for the payment of principal and interest of the obligation.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3436, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 195, § 4; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-36; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-39; 2009, ch. 241, § 8.

### **73-21-40. Rates; bondholders' remedy and taxpayer elector.**

The board of each district issuing revenue bonds under the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act shall establish rates or fees for services rendered by the district utility systems to create an income sufficient to pay all reasonable expenses of operation and create a net revenue that shall be sufficient to pay interest coupons on the revenue bonds, as they mature, and to provide a sinking fund that shall be adequate to discharge the bonds when they mature. It is a board's duty to maintain the rates and fees continuously until the bonds issued by that board have been fully liquidated. In the

event of a board's failure or refusal to do as required by this section, all the members of the board are subject to the penalties provided in Section 73-21-42 NMSA 1978, and any bondholder or a number of taxpayer electors of the district amounting to twenty-five persons or five percent of the electors, whichever is less, has the right to apply to the district court of the county where a district is located for a mandatory order requiring the establishment by a board of rates or fees that shall be adequate to meet the requirements of that act.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3437, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 195, § 5; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-37; Laws 1985, ch. 166, § 2; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-40; 2009, ch. 241, § 9.

### **73-21-41. Restricted use of bond funds.**

Whenever under the provisions of the laws of this state a district obtains money or credits from the issuance of its bonds or other evidence of indebtedness for the purpose of the purchase, construction or extension or repair of district utilities in the district, it shall be unlawful to divert, use or expend any of the money or credits in the purchase, construction or extension or repair of any other water, sewer or fee-for-service system or for any purpose other than that for which the money or credits were obtained.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3438, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 195, § 6; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-38; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-41; 2009, ch. 241, § 10.

### **73-21-42. Violations; penalties.**

The members of any board and any officer or agent of any district violating the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction in the district court shall be subject to a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) or by imprisonment in the county jail not to exceed six months or both in the discretion of the court trying the case.

**History:** 1941 Comp., § 77-3439, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 195, § 7; 1953 Comp., § 75-18-39; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-42; 2009, ch. 241, § 11.

### **73-21-43. Validation; existing districts.**

All districts previously created under the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act and all proceedings previously taken by the districts, including any elections that may have been held in the districts on the question of the issuance of bonds and that have carried, are validated, ratified and confirmed. Where district bonds have been previously approved by the voters but not yet issued, the bonds may be issued under the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act, and where the bonds are to be general obligations of the issuing district, the bonds shall be payable from taxes to be levied on all taxable property in the district as required by the Water and Sanitation District Act. All bonds approved by the voters and to be issued shall, when issued, constitute valid obligations of the districts in accordance with their terms.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-40, enacted by Laws 1963, ch. 261, § 8; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-43; 2009, ch. 241, § 12.

### **73-21-44. Sale of system; escrow of proceeds.**

A district may sell or otherwise dispose of all or any part of its water facilities, sewer facilities or both, including both real and personal property, without an election. A sale or other disposition of district facilities shall be authorized by resolution adopted by the affirmative vote of not less than a majority of all members of the board. A district may immediately apply the proceeds derived from the sale or other disposition of its facilities to the retirement of outstanding bonds or place the proceeds in escrow in a commercial bank or trust company, either a state or national banking institution that possesses and is exercising trust powers, that is located within New Mexico and that is a member of the federal deposit insurance corporation, to be applied to the payment of any outstanding bonds upon their presentation for payment. Any escrow is not necessarily limited to proceeds of the sale or other disposal, but may include other money available for its purpose. Any proceeds in escrow, pending use pursuant to the provisions of this section, may be invested or reinvested in bills, certificates of indebtedness, notes or bonds that are direct obligations of, or the principal and interest of which obligations are unconditionally guaranteed by, the United States or any other legal investment. The proceeds and investments in escrow, together with any interest to be derived from the investment, shall be used only to pay charges of the escrow agent, which are expressly made payable from the escrow, and to pay as many bonds as possible as they become due at their respective maturities or due at a designated prior redemption date in connection with which the board shall exercise a prior redemption option. A purchaser of any facilities that may be sold or otherwise disposed of shall in no manner be responsible for the application of the proceeds by the district or any of its officers, agents or employees. Nothing in this section shall be construed as changing or modifying any contractual agreement or covenant concerning any outstanding bonds as may be provided in the proceedings authorizing any outstanding bonds or otherwise appertaining to them.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-41, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 2; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-44; 2009, ch. 241, § 13.

### **73-21-45. Refunding bonds.**

A. Any bonds issued by any district may be refunded in the name of the district issuing the bonds being refunded without an election by the district issuing them or any successor bonds.

B. The issuance of refunding bonds shall be to:

(1) refund, pay and discharge all or any part of the outstanding bonds, including any interest on the bonds in arrears or about to become due within three years from the date of the refunding bonds;

(2) avoid or terminate any default in the payment of interest on and principal of the bonds to reduce interest costs or effect other economies; or

(3) modify or eliminate restrictive contractual limitations appertaining to the issuance of refunding bonds or for any combination of the purposes permitted by the provisions of this section.

C. Refunding bonds shall be authorized by a resolution adopted by the affirmative vote of not less than a majority of all members of the board. Any bonds that are refunded under the provisions of this section shall be paid at maturity or on any permitted prior redemption date in the amounts, at the times and places and, if called prior to maturity, in accordance with any applicable notice provisions, all as provided in the proceedings authorizing the issuance of the refunded bonds or otherwise appertaining to the bonds being refunded, except for any bonds that are voluntarily surrendered for exchange or payment by the holder. Refunding bonds may be delivered in exchange for the outstanding bonds refunded or may be sold at either public or private sale. The provisions of the Community Service District Act [Chapter 4, Article 54 NMSA 1978] shall not apply to any refunding bonds of any district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-42, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 3; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-45; 2009, ch. 241, § 14.

### **73-21-46. Limitations upon issuance.**

No bonds shall be refunded under the Water and Sanitation District Act unless the bonds either mature or are callable for prior redemption under their terms within ten years from the date of issuance of the refunding bonds, or unless the holders of them voluntarily surrender them for exchange or payment. Provision shall be made for paying the bonds refunded within that period of time. Interest on bonds may be increased, but it may not be increased to a rate exceeding six percent a year. The principal amount of the refunding bonds may exceed the principal amount of the refunded bonds, but only to the extent that any costs incidental to the refunding bonds or any interest on the bonds refunded in arrears or about to become due within three years from the date of the refunding bonds, or both the incidental costs and interest, are capitalized with the proceeds of refunding bonds. The principal amount of the refunding bonds may also exceed the principal amount of the refunded bonds if the aggregate principal and interest costs of the refunding bonds do not exceed the unaccrued costs of the bonds refunded. The principal amount of the refunding bonds may also be less than or the same as the principal amount of the bonds being refunded so long as provision is duly and sufficiently made for the payment of the refunded bonds.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-43, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 4; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-46; 2009, ch. 241, § 15.

### **73-21-47. Proceeds of refunding bonds.**

A. The proceeds of refunding bonds shall either be immediately applied to the retirement of the bonds being refunded or be placed in escrow in a commercial bank or trust company, either a state or national banking institution that possesses and is exercising trust powers, that is located within New Mexico and that is a member of the federal deposit insurance corporation, to be applied to the payment of the bonds being refunded upon their presentation for payment; provided, to the extent any incidental expenses have been capitalized, that the refunding bond proceeds may be used to defray such expenses; and any accrued interest and any premium appertaining to a sale of refunding bonds may be applied to the payment of the interest on them and the principal of them, or both interest and principal, or may be deposited in a reserve as the board may determine.

B. Nothing in this section requires the establishment of an escrow account if the refunded bonds become due and payable within one year from the date of the refunding bonds and if the amount necessary to retire the refunded bonds within that time is deposited with the paying agent for the refunded bonds.

C. An escrow account shall not be limited to proceeds of refunding bonds but may include other money available for the account's purpose. Any proceeds in escrow may be invested or reinvested in bills, certificates of indebtedness, notes or bonds that are direct obligations of, or the principal and interest of which obligations are unconditionally guaranteed by, the United States.

D. The proceeds and investments in escrow, together with any interest derived from the investment of the escrow account, shall be sufficient to pay principal, interest, any prior redemption premium due and any charges of the escrow agent payable from the escrow account and to pay the bonds being refunded as they become due at their respective maturities or due at any designated prior redemption date on which the board shall exercise a prior redemption option.

E. Any purchaser of any refunding bond issued pursuant to the Water and Sanitation District Act is not responsible for the application of the refunding bond proceeds by the district or any of its officers, agents or employees.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-44, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 5; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-47; 2009, ch. 241, § 16.

### **73-21-48. Refunding bonds; detail; form.**

Refunding bonds shall bear interest payable annually or semiannually, and the refunding bonds shall be due and payable either as term or serial bonds as determined by the board; provided that no refunding bond shall mature more than twenty-five years from the date of the refunding bond. The form and terms of the refunding bonds, including provisions for their payment and redemption, shall be determined by the board. If the board so determines in the authorizing resolution, the refunding bonds may

be redeemable prior to maturity without or with the payment of a premium, which may be in any amount determined by the board.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-45, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 6; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-48; 2009, ch. 241, § 17.

### **73-21-49. Combination of issues.**

Bonds for refunding one or more issues originally authorized for one or more purposes and bonds for any other purpose authorized in the Water and Sanitation District Act may be issued separately or issued in combination in one series or more by any district. Bonds payable solely from revenues of any utility or combination of utilities of the district shall not be refunded by general obligation bonds that are payable from general ad valorem property taxes unless authorized at an election as provided in the Water and Sanitation District Act.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-46, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 7; 1978 Comp., § 73-21-49; 2009, ch. 241, § 18.

### **73-21-50. Tax levy for general obligation refunding bonds.**

For the purpose of paying the principal of, any interest on or any prior redemption premium in connection with, any of the district's general obligation refunding bonds, the board may levy and collect general ad valorem taxes on and against all taxable property within the district in the same manner as other general ad valorem taxes. Any such tax levy shall be made without limitation as to rate or amount if made to pay the principal of, interest on or any prior redemption premium in connection with:

A. any general obligation refunding bonds, issued at any time, which refund any of the district's general obligation bonds issued prior to April 2, 1965;

B. any general obligation refunding bonds, issued at any time, which refund any outstanding general obligation refunding bonds which previously refunded any other general obligation bonds, so long as the general obligation bonds originally refunded were issued prior to April 2, 1965. Except as otherwise provided in its section, any such tax levy shall be subject to the tax limitation imposed by Section 4-54-4 NMSA 1978, as hereafter amended from time to time, if made to pay the principal of, interest on or any prior redemption premium in connection with:

(1) any general obligation refunding bonds which refund any of the district's bonds which were issued on or after April 2, 1965, and for a purpose or purposes other than refunding; or

(2) any general obligation refunding bonds which refund any outstanding general obligation refunding bonds which previously refunded any other general

obligation bonds where the general obligation bonds originally refunded were issued on or after April 2, 1965, and for a purpose or purposes other than refunding.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-47, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 8.

### **73-21-51. Applicability of other bond provisions.**

Except as otherwise provided in Sections 73-21-45 through 73-21-50 NMSA 1978, as hereafter amended from time to time, the limitations appertaining to the issuance and the terms and conditions of refunding bonds shall be the same as those provided in Sections 73-21-1 through 73-21-54 NMSA 1978, as hereafter amended from time to time, for an original issue of bonds.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-48, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 9.

### **73-21-52. Duties of local government division.**

The local government division of the department of finance and administration shall approve all budgets of water and sanitation districts and shall from time to time review fiscal policies of such districts and report to the legislature and the governor any actions or policies of the districts deemed to be in violation of the law or the best interest of the people of New Mexico. The district shall submit annually to the local government division its budget for approval in the manner required by regulation of the division. The district shall submit any other information or data concerning the operation of the district, as deemed necessary by the local government division. Violation of the provisions of this section by the board of any water and sanitation district or any officer thereof shall be deemed cause for removal or suspension in the manner as provided by law for county officers.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-48.1, enacted by Laws 1977, ch. 345, § 10.

### **73-21-53. Use of bond proceeds restricted.**

Proceeds from any bonds issued pursuant to the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act shall not be used by the board on any project constructed in fulfillment or partial fulfillment of requirements made of a subdivider by the provisions of the Land Subdivision Act [47-5-1 to 47-5-8 NMSA 1978] or the New Mexico Subdivision Act [Chapter 47, Article 6 NMSA 1978].

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-48.2, enacted by Laws 1977, ch. 345, § 11.

### **73-21-54. Board's determination final.**

The determination of the board that the limitations under Sections 73-21-45 through 73-21-51 NMSA 1978, as hereafter amended from time to time, imposed upon the



issuance of refunding bonds have been met, shall be conclusive in the absence of fraud to the contrary.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 75-18-49, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 187, § 10.

### **73-21-55. Districts not subject to utility laws; option to submit to regulation.**

A. Any district organized under the provisions of the Water and Sanitation District Act may elect by resolution adopted by its board of directors to become subject to the jurisdiction of the public regulation commission and to the terms and provisions of the Public Utility Act [Chapter 62, Article 1 to 6 and 8 to 13 NMSA 1978]; provided, however, that in no event shall Sections 62-9-1 through 62-9-7 NMSA 1978 apply to any district making such an election.

B. If the board has not elected to become subject to the jurisdiction of the public regulation commission:

(1) at least thirty days after publication of a notice of the board's intention to adjust rates, tolls, fees or charges, the board shall conduct a public hearing on the proposed resolution, at which time, after hearing proponents and opponents, the board may reject, amend or adopt the resolution adjusting the rates, tolls, fees or charges;

(2) within thirty days after publication of the resolution adjusting rates, tolls, fees or charges, the new rates, tolls, fees or charges may be appealed by a taxpaying elector to the district court of the county in which the district is located; and

(3) the district court shall consider the petition to overturn the adjustments, based on the record of the board hearing in which the resolution was adopted, under the court's rules governing review by a district court of administrative decisions or orders.

C. If the board of any district located in a class A county with a population according to the 2000 federal decennial census of more than one hundred twenty-five thousand and less than one hundred thirty-five thousand has not elected to become subject to the jurisdiction of the public regulation commission:

(1) at least thirty days after publication of a notice of the board's intention to adjust rates, tolls, fees or charges, the board shall conduct a public hearing on the proposed resolution;

(2) at the expense of the board, the board shall appoint a hearing officer to conduct the public hearing to be chosen from a list of hearing officers provided by the commission, and shall engage a court reporter to record the hearing and produce a verbatim written record of the hearing;

(3) the board's hearing officer shall:

(a) hear proponents and opponents of the proposal;

(b) issue a decision rejecting, amending or adopting the resolution adjusting the rates, tolls, fees or charges; and

(c) within thirty days following the hearing, file the decision with the board;

(4) within seven days of receipt of the decision, the board shall mail a copy of the decision to each proponent and opponent who appeared at the hearing or who requested a written copy of the decision, and the board shall post the decision on the district's web site;

(5) the board shall pay all expenses of the public hearing and may charge a reasonable fee for production of copies of the record; provided that any citizen has the right to obtain a copy of the record on payment of the fee;

(6) within twenty days following the board's mailing of the decision of the hearing officer, the decision may be appealed to the board by a taxpaying elector;

(7) within thirty days of receipt of an appeal of the hearing officer's decision, the board shall, based on a review of the record of the first public hearing, reject, approve or amend the decision of the hearing officer and shall mail a copy of the board's decision within seven days to each proponent and opponent who appeared at the hearing or who requested a written copy of the decision, and the board shall post the decision on the district's web site;

(8) within thirty days following mailing of the board's decision, a taxpaying elector may appeal the decision of the board to the district court of the county in which the district is located; and

(9) the district court shall consider the petition to overturn the adjustments, based on the record certified by the court reporter of the public hearing and the decision of the board, under the court's rules governing review by a district court of administrative decisions or orders.

**History:** 1978 Comp., § 73-21-55, enacted by Laws 1985, ch. 166, § 3; 1993, ch. 282, § 43; 2005, ch. 167, § 6; 2009, ch. 241, § 19.

## **ARTICLE 22**

### **Wind Erosion Districts**

#### **73-22-1. Short title; purpose of act.**

This act [73-22-1 to 73-22-5 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "New Mexico Wind Erosion Act, 1955." To prevent damage to and loss of topsoils essential to the growing of agricultural crops and forage for livestock and to promote the general welfare of the people of the state of New Mexico, this act recognizes that certain prompt and effective preventive measures of an emergency nature must be taken against wind erosion and for such purpose wind erosion districts as herein provided may be established.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-6-22, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 241, § 1.

## **73-22-2. Procedure for establishment of countywide erosion districts.**

A. Freeholders owning in the aggregate in any county 25 percent of the total land area thereof may petition the board of county commissioners for the establishment of a wind erosion district coextensive with the boundaries of the county. Resident entrymen of federal public lands and lessees of state agricultural lands shall be considered as freeholders for the purposes of this act [73-22-1 to 73-22-5 NMSA 1978] and shall share all of the privileges and obligations thereof.

B. The board of county commissioners after determining that any such petition is in conformity with the requirements of Subsection A of this section and upon payment by the petitioners of a sufficient sum to defray the cost shall order an election to be called on the question of the establishment of [such] wind erosion district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-6-23, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 241, § 2.

## **73-22-3. Notice of election, qualification of electors and conduct of election.**

A. The board of county commissioners shall, after an election has been ordered as provided in Section 2B [73-22-2B NMSA 1978] of this act, cause notice, embodying the order in substance, signed by the chairman of such board and attested by the clerk thereof, to be issued, giving public notice of such election, the time and place thereof and the matter submitted to the vote of the electors, said notice to be published in English in some newspaper published and having general circulation in said county, or if there be no such paper, then in some newspaper having general circulation therein, at least once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks, the last insertion of such notice to be not less than thirty (30) days prior to said election.

B. At said election held under the provisions of this act [73-22-1 to 73-22-5 NMSA 1978], the following persons, and no others, shall be deemed electors:

1. all persons who are owners of agricultural lands within the district, or have evidence of title to such lands, or who are purchasers under contract of lands within the district;

2. all resident entrymen of federal public [lands] and lessees of state agricultural lands within such district;

3. any authorized officer or agent of a corporation owning land within such proposed district may cast the ballot of such corporation in all wind erosion district elections;

4. all minors who are the owners of agricultural land within such district, entitled to vote at any election shall cast their vote by their father, mother or duly appointed guardian in the order named, and if they have no father, mother or duly appointed guardian, such minors may cast their own vote;

5. any owner of agricultural lands in said district shall have the right to cast his vote at any election by any other person entitled to vote at such election whom he may so appoint as his proxy for that purpose in writing duly signed by him. Such proxy in writing shall be attached to and deposited with the ballot cast by such designated proxy and such ballot shall be signed by the name of the voter by the proxy, who shall also sign his name as such. Such written proxy shall be acknowledged before some person authorized by the laws of New Mexico to take acknowledgments.

C. Insofar as applicable, the general election laws of this state, except the requirements for registration under Section 3-2-49 [repealed] and residence in state, county and precinct under Section 3-2-51 [repealed] New Mexico Statutes Annotated, 1953 Compilation, and except as in this act otherwise provided, shall govern all elections under this act.

D. The board of county commissioners shall furnish sufficient printed ballots for all voters at each election. The ballots for the election shall contain, a place for the elector to vote for or against the formation of the proposed wind erosion district. Each elector shall sign his name on a line to be provided at the bottom of the ballot for that purpose before voting or casting such ballot.

E. Any qualified elector, as defined in this act, desiring to vote by mail, may do so by preparing his ballot in the manner prescribed by this act, affixing his signature thereto and mailing or sending the same, in a sealed envelope, to the judges of election of the voting district, division or polling place in which he is entitled to vote as designated in the notice of election, provided that such ballot must reach the judges of election therein not later than six o'clock p.m., on the day of such election.

F. The board of directors or board of supervisors, as the case may be, shall furnish each elector immediately upon request, personally or by mail, with a copy of such printed ballot for his use in voting if he will not be present at the polling place on the day of election. Such ballots shall be printed and ready for distribution at least thirty (30) days before any election. The form of ballot for the first election shall be substantially as follows:

## BALLOT

On Question of Formation of \_\_\_\_\_

Wind Erosion District

(Place "X" in one of boxes below)

For Wind Erosion District ..... [ ]

Against Wind Erosion District ..... [ ]

G. The judges of such election, after the polls have closed, shall count and tally the ballots cast, and the clerk shall certify the result of said election and send such certificate together with all the ballots cast at such election and all written proxies to the county clerk of the county, who shall deliver the same to the board of county commissioners, by which body such votes and returns shall be canvassed. The certificate of said election clerk shall also set forth the number of ballots received; the total number of ballots and votes cast; that the said ballots were duly received and voted within the time fixed; that the same are all of the ballots and votes cast and received and that they are in the same condition as when received. After the board of county commissioners has received such certificate, together with the ballots and pollbooks and proxies of such election and has made its canvass, it shall declare and enter of record the results of such election, which shall be done at the next regular or called meeting of such board succeeding said election.

No votes of an elector cast at any election shall be counted unless the ballot has been signed as provided herein.

H. The board of county commissioners shall cause the petition herein provided for, all notices of publication and all orders of said board to be duly entered and recorded in the records of the board of county commissioners.

I. The expense of carrying out the provisions of this act shall be paid by said board of county commissioners out of the general funds of said county.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-6-24, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 241, § 3.

### **73-22-4. Governing body of wind erosion district.**

Whenever a wind erosion district is established under this act [73-22-1 to 73-22-5 NMSA 1978], the board of county commissioners shall be the governing body of such district. The district attorney of the county shall be the legal advisor to the governing body and the county treasurer and the county clerk shall be the treasurer and clerk, respectively, of such district.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-6-25, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 241, § 4.

### **73-22-5. Powers and duties of governing body of wind erosion district.**

A. When a complaint in writing is filed with the governing body by any freeholder of the district or his duly authorized agent, complaining that his lands are being damaged by the effects of wind erosion on lands of an adjoining freeholder and after investigation, it appears that such damage may be minimized or avoided by preventive measures being taken against such wind erosion, it [the governing body] shall notify the owner of the land on which such measures need to be taken to put into effect within a reasonable time the preventive measure against wind erosion as specified in the notice to such owner.

B. If the owner fails to accomplish the work specified in the notice to him within the time prescribed therein, the governing body shall have such work done forthwith charging the cost thereof to the county general fund but such fund shall be reimbursed upon receipt of payment of such cost as provided in Subsection C of this section.

C. The cost of the work performed by the governing body under Subsection B of this section shall be assessed against the land in which the work was performed. Such assessment shall be treated as a special ad valorem assessment and shall be subject to payment, interest, penalties and enforcement in the same manner and to the same extent as county and state taxes.

D. Any person aggrieved may, within thirty days after the filing of the notice of assessment in the office of the county treasurer, appeal to the district court.

**History:** 1953 Comp., § 45-6-26, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 241, § 5.

## **ARTICLE 23**

### **Resource and Transportation Development (Repealed.)**

#### **73-23-1. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 1; 1989, ch. 339, § 1; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

#### **73-23-2. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 2; 1989, ch. 339, § 2; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-3. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 3; 1987, ch. 268, § 40; 1989, ch. 339, § 3; 1991, ch. 21, § 42; 1993, ch. 102, § 1; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-4. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 4; 1989, ch. 67, § 2; 1989, ch. 339, § 4; 1991, ch. 107, § 1; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-5. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 5; 1989, ch. 339, § 5; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-6. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 6; 1989, ch. 339, § 6; 1991, ch. 107, § 2; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-7. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 7; 1991, ch. 107, § 3; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-8. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 8; 1989, ch. 339, § 7; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-9. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 9; 1989, ch. 339, § 8; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-10. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 10; 1989, ch. 339, § 9; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-11. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 11; 1989, ch. 339, § 10; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-12. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 12; 1989, ch. 339, § 11; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

### **73-23-13. Repealed.**

**History:** Laws 1985 (1st S.S.), ch. 14, § 13; 1989, ch. 339, § 12; repealed by Laws 1997, ch. 52, § 9.

## **ARTICLE 24**

# **Joint Flood and Drainage Planning Assessments**

### **73-24-1. Short title.**

The provisions of this act [73-24-1 to 73-24-4 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "Joint Flood and Drainage Planning Assessments Act".

**History:** Laws 1992, ch. 90, § 1.

### **73-24-2. Findings.**

A. There is no mechanism for ensuring that flood and drainage planning assessments performed by flood control districts and conservancy districts are coordinated so as to ensure that conflicts in evaluation and planning for the needs of those districts are minimized and that public funds are expended in the optimal manner possible by flood control districts and conservancy districts that operate in overlapping or adjoining districts.

B. Ensuring that flood and drainage planning assessments performed by flood control districts and conservancy districts that operate in overlapping or adjoining districts will improve coordination, reduce operating costs and enhance the effectiveness of flood control districts and conservancy districts.

**History:** Laws 1992, ch. 90, § 2.

### **73-24-3. Definitions.**

As used in the Joint Flood and Drainage Planning Assessments Act:

A. "planning assessment" means any study, analysis, plan, survey or review of the need for, costs or feasibility of, alternatives to or locations for facilities owned or operated by a flood control district or a conservancy district;



B. "flood control district" means any flood control district created pursuant to Chapter 72, Articles 16 through 18 NMSA 1978; and

C. "conservancy district" means any conservancy district created pursuant to Chapter 73, Articles 14 through 18 NMSA 1978.

**History:** Laws 1992, ch. 90, § 3.

#### **73-24-4. Joint assessments.**

In addition to any other requirements imposed by law, flood control districts and conservancy districts that operate in overlapping or adjoining districts shall perform joint flood and drainage planning assessments to ensure and promote coordination of evaluation and planning for flood control and conservancy district improvements and operations. Such a joint assessment shall be performed at least every year by overlapping or adjoining districts. Each flood control district and conservancy district shall designate a person responsible for monitoring the coordination of flood and drainage planning assessments and shall notify all other overlapping or adjoining flood control or conservancy districts of the name, business address and business telephone number of the person designated.

**History:** Laws 1992, ch. 90, § 4.

## **ARTICLE 25**

### **Regional Transit District**

#### **73-25-1. Short title.**

Chapter 73, Article 25 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Regional Transit District Act".

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 1; 2009, ch. 57, § 1.

#### **73-25-2. Purpose.**

The purpose of the Regional Transit District Act is to:

A. serve the public by providing for the creation of regional networks of safe and efficient public transit services;

B. allow multijurisdictional public transit systems to reduce the congestion of single-occupant motor vehicle traffic by providing transportation options for residents;

C. decrease automobile accidents by reducing traffic congestion on freeways and streets;

D. reduce noise and air pollution produced by motor vehicles;

E. prolong and extend the life of New Mexico's existing roadways by easing the traffic burden;

F. provide residents with a choice of transportation alternatives so that seniors, youth, low-income and mobility-impaired residents and others unable to drive or afford motor vehicles continue to have full access to the goods, services, jobs and activities of the community;

G. improve the New Mexico economy by increasing workforce and citizen access to education and higher paying jobs; and

H. prolong and extend petroleum resources.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 2.

### **73-25-3. Definitions.**

As used in the Regional Transit District Act:

A. "board" means the board of directors of a district;

B. "bond" means a revenue bond;

C. "combination" means two or more governmental units that exercise joint authority;

D. "commission" means the state transportation commission;

E. "construct" or "construction" means the planning, designing, engineering, acquisition, installation, construction or reconstruction of a regional transit system;

F. "district" means a regional transit district that is a political subdivision of the state created pursuant to the Regional Transit District Act;

G. "governmental unit" means the state, a county or a municipality of the state or an Indian nation, tribe or pueblo located within the boundaries of the state;

H. "regional transit system" means a property, improvement or system designed to be compatible with established state and local transportation plans that transports or conveys passengers within a region by means of a high-occupancy vehicle, including an automobile, truck, bus, van or railcar; and

I. "revenues" means tolls, fees, rates, charges, assessments, grants, contributions or other income and revenues received by the district.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 3.

#### **73-25-4. Creation of districts.**

A. A combination may create a district by contract. Upon the issuance by the commission of a certificate stating that the district has been duly organized according to the provisions of the Regional Transit District Act, the district may exercise the functions conferred by the provisions of that act. The commission shall issue the certificate within thirty days of the filing with the commission of a copy of a contract that fulfills all the requirements set forth in this section and a copy of the bylaws and operating procedures of the district. The commission shall cause the certificate to be recorded in each county having territory included in the boundaries of the district. Upon issuance of the certificate by the commission, the district shall constitute a separate political subdivision of the state and shall have all of the duties, privileges, immunities, rights, liabilities and disabilities of a political subdivision.

B. A contract establishing a district shall specify the:

- (1) name and purpose of the district and the regional transit systems to be provided;
- (2) establishment and organization of the board in which all legislative power of the district is vested;
- (3) manner of the appointment, term of service and qualifications, if any, of the directors and the procedure for filling vacancies;
- (4) officers of the district, the manner of their appointment and their duties;
- (5) voting requirements for action by the board;
- (6) provisions for the distribution, disposition or division of the assets of the district;
- (7) boundaries of the district, which shall not include territory:
  - (a) outside the boundaries of the members of the combination without the consent of the governing body of the governmental unit of the territory; or
  - (b) within the unincorporated boundaries of a county that is not a member of the combination as the unincorporated boundaries of the county exist on the date the district is created without the consent of the governing body of the county;
- (8) term of the contract and the method by which it may be terminated or rescinded. The contract shall not be terminated or rescinded so long as the district has bonds outstanding;

(9) provisions for amendment of the contract;

(10) limitations on the powers granted by the Regional Transit District Act that may be exercised by the district; and

(11) conditions required when adding or deleting parties to the contract pursuant to Section 18 [73-25-18 NMSA 1978] of the Regional Transit District Act.

C. A governmental unit shall not enter into a contract establishing a district without holding at least one public hearing in addition to other requirements imposed by law for public notice. The governmental unit shall give notice of the time, place and purpose of the public hearing by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the governmental unit at least ten days prior to the date of the public hearing.

D. Upon the approval of the governor, the state may join in a contract creating a district. The number of directors of the board to which the state is entitled shall be established in the contract, but in no case shall the state be entitled to less than one director. The governor shall appoint the director or directors representing the state on the board, for a term as established by the contract that created the district.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 4.

### **73-25-5. Board.**

A. All powers, privileges and duties vested in or imposed upon the district shall be exercised and performed by the board. The board may delegate its powers by resolution to an officer or agent of the board, with the exception of the following:

- (1) adoption of board policies and procedures;
- (2) ratification of acquisition of land by negotiated sale;
- (3) initiation or continuation of legal action, not involving traffic or toll violations;
- (4) establishment of policies regarding fees, tolls, rates or charges;
- (5) approval of significant route or schedule changes affecting more than twenty-five percent of a regional transit system; and
- (6) issuance of bonds.

B. Only an elected official shall be able to vote on resolutions regarding Paragraphs (2) and (6) of Subsection A of this section.

C. The board shall promulgate and adhere to policies and procedures that govern its conduct and provide meaningful opportunities for public input. These policies shall include standards and procedures for calling emergency meetings.

D. The board shall be composed of at least one director from each governmental unit that is a member of the district. A director shall be an elected official or his designee. A governmental unit shall not have a majority of membership on the board, unless there are three or fewer participating governmental units in the district.

E. A director of the board shall not vote on an issue when the director has a conflict of interest. A director of the board, officer of the board or employee of the board shall not:

(1) acquire a financial interest in a new or existing business venture or business property of any kind when he believes or has reason to believe that the new financial interest will be directly affected by his official act;

(2) use confidential information acquired by virtue of his office or employment for his or another's private gain; or

(3) contract with the district without public notice and competitive bidding and full disclosure of his financial or other interest in the business that is party to the contract.

F. The attorney general shall investigate and prosecute, when appropriate, a complaint brought to his attention involving a violation of Subsection D of this section. Violation of the provisions of Subsection D of this section by a director of the board, officer of the board or employee of the board is grounds for removal or suspension of the director or officer and dismissal, demotion or suspension of the employee.

G. In addition to all other powers conferred by the Regional Transit District Act, the board may:

(1) adopt bylaws;

(2) fix the time and place of meetings and the method of providing notice of the meetings;

(3) make and pass orders and resolutions necessary for the government and management of the affairs of the district and the execution of the powers vested in the district;

(4) adopt and use a seal;

(5) maintain offices at a place as the board may designate;

(6) appoint, hire and retain employees, agents, engineers, attorneys, accountants, financial advisors, investment bankers and other consultants;

(7) prescribe, in accordance with the Procurement Code [13-1-28 to 13-1-199 NMSA 1978], methods for auditing and allowing or rejecting claims and demands for:

(a) the awarding of contracts for the construction of improvements, works or structures;

(b) the acquisition of equipment; or

(c) the performance or furnishing of labor, materials or supplies as may be required for carrying out the purposes of the Regional Transit District Act; and

(8) appoint advisory committees and define the duties of the committees.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 5.

### **73-25-6. Powers of the district.**

A. A district is a body politic and corporate. In addition to other powers granted to the district pursuant to the Regional Transit District Act, the district may:

(1) have perpetual existence, except as otherwise provided in the contract;

(2) sue and be sued;

(3) enter into contracts and agreements affecting the affairs of the district;

(4) establish, collect and increase or decrease fees, tolls, rates or charges for the use of property of a regional transit system financed, constructed, operated or maintained by the district; except that fees, tolls, rates or charges imposed for the use of a regional transit system shall be fixed and adjusted to pay for bonds issued by the district;

(5) pledge all or a portion of the revenues to the payment of bonds of the district;

(6) finance, construct, operate or maintain regional transit systems within the boundaries of the district;

(7) purchase, trade, exchange, acquire, buy, sell, lease, lease with an option to purchase, dispose of and encumber real or personal property and interest therein, including easements and rights of way;

(8) accept real or personal property for the use of the district and accept gifts and conveyances upon the terms and conditions as the board may approve;

(9) use the streets, highways and other public ways and, with permission of the owner, to relocate or alter the construction of streets, highways, other public ways, electric and telephone lines and properties, pipelines, conduits and other properties, whether publicly or privately owned, if deemed necessary by the district in the construction, reconstruction, repair, maintenance and operation of the system. Any damage that may occur to the property shall be borne by the district; and

(10) provide transportation services outside the boundaries of the district.

B. After the creation of a district, the board may include property within or exclude property from the boundaries of the district in the manner provided in this section. Property shall not be included within the boundaries of the district unless it is within the boundaries of the members of the combination at the time of the inclusion. Property located within the boundaries of a governmental unit that is not a member of the combination as the boundaries of the governmental unit exist on the date the property is included shall not be included without the consent of the governing body of the governmental unit. Prior to inclusion of property in or exclusion of property from the boundaries of the district, the board shall cause notice of the proposed inclusion or exclusion to be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the boundaries of the district and cause the notice to be mailed to the commission. The notice shall:

(1) describe the property to be included in or excluded from the boundaries of the district;

(2) specify the date, time and place at which the board shall hold a public hearing on the proposed inclusion or exclusion; provided that the date of the public hearing contained in the notice shall be not less than twenty days after publication of the notice; and

(3) state that persons having objections to the inclusion or exclusion may appear at the public hearing to object to the proposed inclusion or exclusion.

C. The board shall hear all objections to the proposed inclusion or exclusion at the time and place designated in the notice. The board, upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the directors, may adopt a resolution including or excluding all or a portion of the property described in the notice. Upon the adoption of the resolution, the property shall be included within or excluded from the boundaries of the district as set forth in the resolution. The board may adopt the resolution without amending the district's enabling contract. The board shall file the resolution with the commission, who shall cause the resolution to be recorded in the real estate records of each county having territory included in the boundaries of the district.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 6.

### **73-25-7. Toll collection.**

A. A district may promulgate rules regarding collection of fees, tolls, rates or charges. State and local law enforcement authorities may enter into traffic and toll enforcement agreements with a district.

B. A person who fails to pay a fee, toll, rate or charge required for the privilege of traveling on or using property included in a regional transit system may be assigned a fine of not more than one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) or not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00). The magistrate or metropolitan court where the offense took place shall have jurisdiction over actions brought pursuant to this subsection.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 7.

### **73-25-8. Bonds.**

A. A district may issue bonds solely for the purpose of financing the purchase, construction, renovation, equipping or furnishing of a regional transit system project. The district shall issue the bonds pursuant to resolution of the board, and the bonds shall be payable solely out of all or a specified portion of the revenues as designated by the board. Proceeds of the bonds may be used to pay expenses incurred in the preparation, issuance and sale of the bonds.

B. As provided in the resolution of the board under which the bonds are authorized to be issued, the bonds shall:

- (1) be executed and delivered by the district;
- (2) be in a form and denomination and include terms and maturities;
- (3) be subject to optional or mandatory redemption prior to maturity with or without a premium;
- (4) be in fully registered form or bearer form registrable as to principal or interest or both;
- (5) bear conversion privileges;
- (6) be payable in installments and at a time not exceeding forty years from the date of issuance;
- (7) be payable within or outside the state;
- (8) have the principal paid in yearly amounts beginning not later than two years from the date of issuance of the bonds;



(9) be subject to purchase at the option of the holder or the district;

(10) be executed by the officers of the district, including the use of one or more facsimile signatures so long as at least one manual signature appears on the bonds, which signatures may be either of an officer of the district or of an agent authenticating the same;

(11) be in the form of coupon bonds that have attached interest coupons bearing a manual or facsimile signature of an officer of the district; and

(12) be sold at a net effective interest rate not exceeding the maximum net effective interest rate permitted by the Public Securities Act [6-14-1 to 6-14-3 NMSA 1978].

C. Bonds may be sold at public or private sale at a price, in a manner and at a time determined by the board, and the board may pay all fees, expenses and commissions that it deems necessary or advantageous in connection with the sale of the bonds. The power to fix the date of sale of the bonds, receive bids or proposals, award and sell bonds, fix interest rates and take all other action necessary to sell and deliver the bonds may be delegated to an officer or agent of the district. Outstanding bonds may be refunded by the district as provided in the Public Securities Act.

D. A resolution authorizing the issuance of bonds may pledge all or a portion of the revenues of the district, may contain a provision for protecting and enforcing the rights and remedies of holders of the bonds as the district deems appropriate, may set forth the rights and remedies of the holders of the bonds and may contain provisions that the district deems appropriate for the security of the holders of the bonds.

E. A pledge of revenues or property made by a district or by a person or governmental unit with which a district contracts shall be valid and binding from the time the pledge is made. The revenues or property so pledged shall immediately be subject to the lien of the pledge without a physical delivery or further act, and the lien of the pledge shall be valid and binding against all parties having claims in tort or contract or otherwise against the pledging party, irrespective of whether the claiming party has notice of the lien.

F. Neither the directors of the board, employees of the district or a person executing the bonds shall be liable personally on the bonds or subject to personal liability or accountability by reason of the issuance of the bonds.

G. A district may purchase its bonds out of available funds and may hold, pledge, cancel or resell the bonds subject to and in accordance with agreements with the holders.

H. Bonds shall be payable solely from pledgeable revenue and shall not constitute an indebtedness or general obligation of the district, the state or other political subdivisions of the state.

I. The form and terms of bonds shall be approved by the state board of finance before issuance of the bonds.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 8.

### **73-25-9. Agreement of the state not to limit or alter rights of obligees.**

The state pledges and agrees with the holders of bonds issued under the Regional Transit District Act and with those parties who enter into contracts with a district or a member of a combination pursuant to the Regional Transit District Act that the state will not impair the rights vested in the district or the rights or obligations of a person with which the district contracts to fulfill the terms of an agreement made pursuant to the Regional Transit District Act. The state further agrees that it will not impair the rights or remedies of the holders of the bonds of a district until the bonds have been paid or until adequate provision for payment has been made. A district may include this provision and undertaking for the state in bonds.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 9.

### **73-25-10. Investments.**

A board may invest or deposit funds in accordance with the prudent investor rule set forth in the Uniform Prudent Investor Act [45-7-601 to 45-7-612 NMSA 1978]. The board may employ investment management services to invest the funds and may pay reasonable compensation for investment management services from the assets of the applicable funds. The board shall keep accurate and complete records and accounts concerning the investment portfolio.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 10.

### **73-25-11. Exemption from taxation.**

The income or other revenues of a district, all properties at any time owned by a district, all bonds issued by a district and the income from the bonds issued by a district are exempt from taxation in the state.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 11.

### **73-25-12. Cooperative powers.**

A district may cooperate with a person to:

A. accept legitimate contributions or liens securing obligations of the district from the person with respect to the financing, construction, operation or maintenance of a regional transit system and, in connection with a loan or advance, enter into contracts establishing the repayment terms;

B. enter into contracts regarding the financing, construction, operation or maintenance of a specified regional transit system;

C. enter into joint operating contracts concerning a regional transit system;

D. acquire easements or rights of way for a regional transit system; and

E. designate a regional transit system as part of the state highway system, a county highway system or a municipal highway system if the person with jurisdiction over the applicable highway system consents to the designation.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 12.

### **73-25-13. Powers of governmental units.**

A governmental unit, for the purpose of aiding the financing, construction, operation or maintenance of a regional transit system, may:

A. sell, lease, loan, donate, grant, convey, assign, transfer and otherwise dispose to the district real or personal property or interests therein;

B. enter into agreements with a person for the joint financing, construction, operation or maintenance of a regional transit system. Upon compliance with applicable constitutional or charter limitations, the governmental unit may agree to make payments, without limitation as to amount except as set forth in the agreement, from revenues received from one or more fiscal years, to the district or a person to defray the costs of the financing, construction, operation or maintenance of a regional transit system; and

C. transfer to the district a contract that may have been awarded by the governmental unit for construction, operation or maintenance of a regional transit system.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 13.

### **73-25-14. Notice; opportunity for comment.**

A. At least forty-five days prior to a meeting at which the board shall consider or take action on a proposal to request, establish, increase or decrease a rate, toll, fee or

charge, the board shall deliver written notice of the meeting and proposal to a governmental unit where the proposed rate, toll, fee or charge will be imposed. The affected governmental unit shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity for comment, either at a regular meeting of the board or at a special meeting convened to receive comment.

B. At least seven business days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting, the board shall make available to the public written or electronic notice of the time and agenda of the meeting. The board shall designate during each meeting a public comment period and shall offer the public an opportunity to comment.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 14.

### **73-25-15. Notice; coordination of information.**

A. At least forty-five days prior to the imposition of or an increase in a rate, toll, fee or charge or prior to the issuance of bonds as authorized in the Regional Transit District Act, a notice specifying the amount of the fee, toll, rate or charge and its proposed duration or the value and number of bonds to be issued shall be sent to the commission and to the taxation and revenue department.

B. The commission shall file an annual report with the state auditor concerning the activities of all active districts. The report shall detail how many districts have been created, describe their boundaries and specify the regional transit systems that are being provided and how they are being financed.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 15.

### **73-25-16. Taxation.**

A district has no direct taxation authority.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 16.

### **73-25-17. Addition or withdrawal of territory by a district.**

A. After the creation of a district, a governmental unit adjacent to but not part of that district may join the district and determine the territorial area to become a part of that district. A two-thirds affirmative vote by the board shall be required before the governmental unit may join the district.

B. A governmental unit that is a member of a district may withdraw from the district by adopting a resolution to withdraw. The governmental unit shall withdraw its representative from the board. Real property owned by the district within the boundaries of the withdrawing governmental unit shall remain the property of the district. The

provisions of withdrawal shall be negotiated and agreed to by the board, the governmental unit and the commission.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 17.

### **73-25-18. Matching funds.**

The local government members of a combination shall match at least one dollar (\$1.00) for every four dollars (\$4.00) provided by the state. Before a district is able to receive state matching funds, it must be certified by the commission pursuant to Section 4 [73-25-4 NMSA 1978] of the Regional Transit District Act.

**History:** Laws 2003, ch. 65, § 18.

### **73-25-19. Authorization to employ commuter rail service law enforcement officers; powers and duties of officers.**

A. A district that operates a commuter rail service may employ commuter rail service law enforcement officers for the district and assign duties to the officers.

B. At all times while on duty, commuter rail service law enforcement officers shall carry commissions of office issued by the district. Commuter rail service law enforcement officers shall have the powers of peace officers on all property, tracks, rights of way, easements, vehicles, buses, vans, railcars, locomotives and facilities owned, leased, licensed, maintained or operated by the district. Within this territory, a commuter rail service law enforcement officer may enforce all applicable laws, ordinances and regulations, but no arrest for violation of any law, ordinance or regulation is valid unless, at the time of arrest, the commuter rail service law enforcement officer is wearing:

(1) a distinctive badge bearing the name of the district issued by the district;  
or

(2) a distinctive uniform prescribed and issued by the district.

C. A person employed by the district as a commuter rail service law enforcement officer shall fulfill the requirements for certification in Subsection A of Section 29-7-6 NMSA 1978 within one year of the date of first employment.

D. A district may contract with other law enforcement agencies to provide law enforcement services for the district.

**History:** Laws 2009, ch. 57, § 2.

## **ARTICLE 26**

### **Lower Rio Grande Public Water Works Authority**

#### **73-26-1. Lower Rio Grande public water works authority.**

A. The "Lower Rio Grande public water works authority" is created. The authority is a political subdivision of the state and shall be an independent public body. The authority is composed of Berino mutual domestic water consumers and mutual sewage works association, Desert Sands mutual domestic water consumers association, La Mesa mutual domestic water consumers association, Mesquite mutual domestic water consumers and mutual sewage works association and Vado mutual domestic water consumers association, all serving unincorporated communities within Dona Ana county. The voting community membership of the five founding entities has approved by resolution the development of the authority.

B. The authority may adopt rules and resolutions, governance policies and procedures necessary to exercise the powers conferred pursuant to this section.

C. All functions, appropriations, money, records and equipment and all personal property and real property, including water rights, easements, permits and infrastructure, as well as all encumbrances, debts and liabilities pertaining to or owned by the founding entities shall be transferred to the authority.

D. The authority's service area shall consist of the founding entities' existing place of use on file with and approved by the state engineer and shall be filed in the public records of Dona Ana county. An application shall be filed with the state engineer to combine and commingle water rights and to combine the existing entities' place of use into the authority's service area. In the event that another entity elects to merge into the authority, the authority's service area shall be amended to include that entity's place of use and shall be filed with the state engineer. The authority's initial service area and any subsequent amendments to its service area shall be designated in a plat filed in the public records of Dona Ana county. If the service area of the merging entity is contiguous with the service area of the authority, the merger shall include the combining and commingling of water rights with the authority by application filed with the state engineer.

E. The authority may provide for water and wastewater services, road improvements for the protection of the authority's infrastructure or renewable energy projects that are integral to the operation and maintenance of the authority's facilities or any combination or parts thereof.

F. The authority shall exercise all powers allowed pursuant to law, including:

- (1) regulating, supervising and operating the authority's facilities;

(2) establishing rates and imposing assessments, fees and charges and taking action necessary for the enforcement thereof;

(3) assessing a standby charge for the privilege of connection into the authority's service at some date in the future if the property line is within three hundred feet of the authority's service lines and the property line is located within the boundaries of the authority. This section applies to new connections after the enactment of this act;

(4) acquiring, from a willing seller only, holding and using water rights in an amount necessary to meet its reasonable needs not to exceed forty years pursuant to Section 72-1-9 NMSA 1978;

(5) shutting off, after notice, unauthorized connections, illegal connections or a connection for which charges are delinquent in payment;

(6) entering into contracts for services with private entities, the state, municipalities, counties and the federal government and other public bodies to further its public purposes;

(7) entering into joint powers agreements with other governmental entities;

(8) acquiring and disposing of real property, personal property and rights of way;

(9) condemning property pursuant to the Eminent Domain Code [42A-1-1 to 42A-1-33 NMSA 1978] as the last resort and only for the purposes of construction, maintenance and operations of the authority's infrastructure;

(10) hiring and retaining agents, employees and consultants, as needed;

(11) adopting and using a governmental seal;

(12) placing a lien on property for unpaid assessments, charges and fees and enforcing the lien in a manner pursuant to this section;

(13) suing and being sued and being a party to suits, actions and proceedings; and

(14) having and exercising all rights and powers necessary, incidental to or implied from the specific powers granted in this section.

G. As a political subdivision of the state and a member-owned community water system, the authority shall be subject to the:

(1) applicable rules and regulations of the department of environment, and in its discretion the department may:

- (a) conduct periodic reviews of the operation of the authority;
  - (b) require the authority to submit information to the department;
  - (c) upon department of environment discretion or upon a petition of twenty-five percent of the members of the authority, conduct an investigation as it deems necessary to ensure the authority's compliance with all applicable statutes, rules, regulations and reporting requirements; and
  - (d) after a hearing, set and collect rates and fees and use the same for the proper operation and management of the authority;
- (2) applicable rules and regulations of the department of finance and administration, local government division and budget and finance bureau;
  - (3) Open Meetings Act [Chapter 10, Article 15 NMSA 1978];
  - (4) Inspection of Public Records Act [Chapter 14, Article 2 NMSA 1978];
  - (5) Audit Act [12-6-1 to 12-6-14 NMSA 1978];
  - (6) Procurement Code [13-1-28 to 13-1-199 NMSA 1978];
  - (7) Governmental Conduct Act [Chapter 10, Article 16 NMSA 1978];
  - (8) Chapter 72 NMSA 1978; and
  - (9) applicable rules and regulations of the state engineer.

H. The authority is a political subdivision of the state and a member-owned community water system and shall not be subject to the jurisdiction of the public regulation commission or the provisions of the Public Utility Act.

I. The authority may issue utility system revenue bonds and obligations for acquiring real and personal property needed for the utility system and for extending, enlarging, renovating, repairing or otherwise improving its facilities. The authority may issue revenue anticipation notes with maturities and terms to be approved by the board of directors of the authority. The authority may pledge irrevocably net revenues from the operation of the utility system for payment of the principal, premiums and interest on the bonds. The utility system revenue bonds:

- (1) may have interest, appreciated principal value or any part thereof payable at intervals or at maturity as the authority determines;



(2) may be subject to prior redemption at the authority's option at such time and upon such terms and conditions, with or without the payment of a premium, as determined by the authority;

(3) may mature at any time not exceeding forty years after the date of issuance;

(4) may be serial in form and maturity, may consist of one bond payable at one time or in installments or may be in another form as determined by the authority;

(5) shall be sold for cash at, above or below par and at a price that results in a net effective interest rate that does not exceed the maximum permitted by the Public Securities Act [6-14-1 to 6-14-3 NMSA 1978]; and

(6) may be sold at a public or negotiated sale.

J. The authority's board of directors may adopt a resolution declaring the necessity for the issuance of utility system revenue bonds or other obligations and may authorize the issuance of utility system revenue bonds or other obligations by an affirmative vote of a majority of all members of the authority's board of directors. Utility revenue bonds and the resolution authorizing their issuance shall be subject to voter approval with oversight from the department of finance and administration and the New Mexico finance authority. The bonds authorized by the authority and their income shall be exempt from taxation by the state and its political subdivisions.

K. Except for the purpose of refunding previous utility system revenue bond issues, the authority shall not sell utility system revenue bonds payable from pledged revenues after the expiration of three years from the date of the resolution authorizing their issuance. Any period of time during which a utility system revenue bond is in litigation shall not count toward the determination of the expiration date of that issue.

L. The authority shall be governed by a board of directors. The board of directors shall be elected by districts from a minimum of five and a maximum of seven electoral districts. Each director shall reside within and be a qualified elector of the electoral district of the authority from which that member is elected. The boundaries and the number of electoral districts shall be established by the initial board within two years of the creation of the authority. The board may in its governance document provide for redistricting upon any change in the authority's boundary and following each decennial census. The elected board of directors shall serve staggered terms to be established in the governance document developed by the board.

M. All elections of the authority shall be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the Local Election Act [Chapter 1, Article 22 NMSA 1978] and voted upon by the qualified electors registered to vote within the boundaries of the authority. Board members shall be elected at the regular local election. Vacancies on the board shall be filled by the remaining board members and a person appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve until the

next regular local election. A person appointed to fill a vacancy shall be a qualified elector of the districted area the person is appointed to represent.

N. If the authority places a lien on property for nonpayment of money owed, the authority shall file in the office of the county clerk of the county or counties in which the property is located a notice of lien, which shall include:

- (1) identification of the outstanding debt to the authority;
- (2) the fact that a lien is established;
- (3) the general purpose of the lien;
- (4) the name of the owner of the property against which the lien is established as determined from the records of the county assessor;
- (5) a description of the property against which the lien is established;
- (6) the amount of the lien; and
- (7) if the lien is for more than one period of time, the date for which the lien is established.

O. A lien for multiple charges or assessments on a property owner may be included in the same notice of lien, and it shall not be necessary to file separate liens against the separate properties. The lien shall be attested in the name of the authority. The principal amount of any lien imposed for a charge or assessment shall bear interest at the rate of twelve percent per year from the date of filing the notice of lien unless otherwise provided by law.

P. After the filing of the notice of lien in the office of the county clerk, the authority shall have a lien upon the property described in the notice of lien. The filing of the notice of lien shall be notice to all the world of the existence of the lien and of the contents of the notice of lien. No such lien shall affect the title or rights to or in any real estate, of any purchaser, mortgagee in good faith or judgment lien creditor, without knowledge of the existence of such lien, unless the notice of lien is filed in accordance with this section in the office of the county clerk of the county in which the real estate is situated. All authority liens shall be first and prior liens on the property subject only to the lien of federal, state and county taxes. The authority may release a lien against any specific property by:

- (1) entering and signing a receipt of payment upon the notice of lien filed in the office of the county clerk; or
- (2) issuing a separate receipt that recites that payment of the lien with any accrued interest and penalty has been made.

Q. The authority may, in a single suit, foreclose the liens against all persons named in the notice of liens or against the property if the owners are unknown. The complaint filed shall:

- (1) expressly name each defendant, if known;
- (2) describe the property against which the lien is established; and
- (3) set forth the amount of the lien.

R. The judgment or decree rendered in said cause shall be several against the named defendants and against the several properties for the amounts decreed to be due by each. A lien against real estate may be foreclosed in the same manner that mortgages or other liens against real estate are foreclosed with like rights of redemption. In the foreclosure of any lien created by the authority, reasonable attorney fees may be ordered by the court as part of the costs in favor of the prevailing party.

S. The authority shall prepare and sign a notice of foreclosure, which shall also bear the signature and mailing address of an attorney representing the authority. The proceeds of the sale of the property by the authority pursuant to a foreclosure sale on a lien shall be applied as follows:

- (1) first, to the payment of costs in giving notice of the sale and of conducting the sale;
- (2) second, to the indebtedness claimed under a lien on the property for federal, state, county, municipal or ad valorem taxes;
- (3) third, to the indebtedness claimed under the lien of the authority;
- (4) fourth, to all other special assessments having a lien on the property; and
- (5) fifth, after all such costs, liens, assessments and taxes are paid, to the former owner, mortgage holder or parties having an interest in the tract or parcel, upon such persons providing satisfactory proof to the court of such interest and upon approval of the court.

T. As used in this section, "public water works authority" means a utility organized as a political subdivision of the state for the purposes of constructing infrastructure and furnishing water and wastewater services for domestic, commercial or industrial uses, road improvements for the protection of the authority's infrastructure and renewable energy projects; and entering into agreements with other entities for the provision of other services, including water conservation and reclamation, source water protection, drainage, flood control, solid waste, planning and zoning.

**History:** Laws 2009, ch. 100, § 1; 2017, ch. 124, § 1; 2019, ch. 212, § 268.

A. The term of a branch community college district, special hospital district, solid waste authority district, lower Rio Grande public water works authority or watershed district board member that was set to expire on or before June 30, 2020 shall expire on December 31, 2019, and that member's successor shall be elected in the regular local election held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November 2019 for a term beginning on January 1, 2020.

B. The term of a branch community college district, special hospital district, solid waste authority district, lower Rio Grande public water works authority or watershed district board member that was set to expire on or after July 1, 2020 but on or before June 30, 2022 shall expire on December 31, 2021, and that member's successor shall be elected in the local election held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November 2021 for a term beginning on January 1, 2022.

C. The term of a special hospital district or watershed district board member that was set to expire on or after July 1, 2022 shall expire on December 31, 2023, and that member's successor shall be elected in the local election held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November 2023 for a term beginning on January 1, 2024.

## **ARTICLE 27**

### **Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority**

#### **73-27-1. Short title.**

This act [73-27-1 to 73-27-19 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act".

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 1.

#### **73-27-2. Findings and purpose.**

A. The legislature finds that:

(1) consistent with the goals of the statewide water plan, water systems should be planned for and constructed on a regional basis, in that regional water systems are able to take advantage of economies of scale;

(2) the costs of designing, purchasing, constructing, rehabilitating, renovating, improving, equipping, furnishing, operating and maintaining regional water systems have increased to a level that local financial resources are inadequate to meet all of the costs and that federal funding is crucial to complete a large scale water supply project in eastern New Mexico; and

(3) a water utility authority is necessary in eastern New Mexico to provide an organized structure to work with state, local and federal agencies to complete a water delivery system from the Ute Reservoir to local governments.

B. The purposes of the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act are:

(1) to create a water utility authority to develop and construct a water delivery system based on a funding formula whereby up to seventy-five percent of the overall capital cost of the system is to be paid for by the federal government, fifteen percent is to be paid for by the state of New Mexico and ten percent is to be paid for by the local governments that have the power to appoint members to the board of the authority; and

(2) to create an authority that will deliver water to the local governments within the boundaries of the authority but that will not compete with local governments for rights to deliver water to ultimate end-users.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 2.

### **73-27-3. Definitions.**

As used in the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act:

A. "authority" means the eastern New Mexico water utility authority; and

B. "board" means the board of directors of the authority.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 3.

### **73-27-4. Eastern New Mexico water utility authority; created.**

A. The "eastern New Mexico water utility authority" is created coextensive with the boundaries of Curry and Roosevelt counties and the territory physically occupied by the water facilities of the authority to plan, design, develop, purchase, acquire, own, operate, establish, construct and maintain the eastern New Mexico rural water system pipelines and waterworks to supply water for domestic, commercial, non-irrigated agricultural and industrial purposes by any available means to persons within and without the boundaries of the authority.

B. The eastern New Mexico water utility authority is created for the benefit of the four members of the eastern New Mexico rural water authority, including the city of Clovis, the city of Portales, the city of Texico and the town of Elida.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 4; 2020, ch. 60, § 1.

### **73-27-5. Board; appointment; terms.**

A. The board shall consist of six members, each of whom shall reside within the boundaries of the authority, appointed as follows:

(1) three board members appointed by the Clovis city commission for a term of two years; provided, however, that two of the initial members shall be appointed for a term of one year for the purpose of having a staggered board;

(2) two board members appointed by the Portales city council for a term of two years; provided, however, that one of the initial members shall be appointed for a term of one year for the purpose of having a staggered board; and

(3) one board member appointed for a term of one year on a rotating basis and in the following order by:

(a) the Texico city council; and

(b) the Elida town council.

B. A vacancy occurring by other than expiration of a term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, but only for the unexpired term.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 5; 2020, ch. 60, § 2.

### **73-27-6. Board; powers; duties.**

A. All powers, privileges and duties vested in or imposed upon the authority shall be exercised and performed by the board; provided that the board may delegate its powers by resolution to an officer or agent of the board, with the exception of the following powers:

(1) adoption of board rules, policies and procedures;

(2) ratification of acquisition of property;

(3) initiation or continuation of legal action, except that initiation and filing of liens for unpaid rates and charges and suits for payment thereof and discontinuance of service for failure to pay such rates and charges may be delegated;

(4) establishment of fees, tolls, rates or charges; and

(5) issuance of revenue bonds.

B. Meetings of the board shall be held at the call of the chair or whenever three members shall so request in writing. A majority of members then serving constitutes a quorum for the transaction of any business. Except as provided in Subsection C of this section, the affirmative vote of at least a majority of a quorum present shall be

necessary for any action to be taken by the board. A vacancy in the membership of the board shall not impair the right of a quorum to exercise all rights and perform all duties of the board.

C. The non-delegable powers and duties provided in Subsection A of this section shall only be effective upon resolution passed by a supermajority of four members of the board.

D. The board shall promulgate and adhere to rules, policies and procedures that govern its conduct.

E. A member of the board having a financial interest or possible interest in the outcome of any policy, decision or determination before the board shall be disqualified from voting on the issue. A member's status as a ratepayer or customer of the authority shall not be deemed to constitute a financial interest or possible interest for the purposes of this section.

F. Subject to Subsections B through D of this section, the board may:

- (1) adopt bylaws;
- (2) fix the time and place of meetings and the method of providing notice of the meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Act [Chapter 10, Article 15 NMSA 1978];
- (3) promulgate orders, resolutions, policies and rules necessary for the governance and management of the affairs of the authority and the execution of the powers vested in the authority;
- (4) maintain offices at a place as the board may designate;
- (5) employ a director who may employ and retain necessary staff;
- (6) establish user classifications;
- (7) fix and from time to time increase or decrease water rates, fees or other charges for water delivery or other related services or facilities operated or made available by the authority, subject to the following conditions:
  - (a) the rates, tolls or charges shall be uniform for all municipalities that have the power to appoint a member to the board;
  - (b) until paid, all rates, tolls or charges constitute a perpetual lien on and against the property served, and any such lien may be foreclosed in the same manner as provided by the laws of New Mexico for the foreclosure of real estate mortgages and shall not be subject to any limitations period, statutory or otherwise;

(c) the board shall prescribe and enforce rules by which properties shall be connected with and disconnected from the facilities of the authority, including payment plans to avoid discontinuing service to delinquent accounts;

(d) after giving reasonable notice, the board shall shut off or discontinue service for unauthorized connections, illegal connections or connections for which rates, tolls or other charges are delinquent in payment. The board may file suit in a court of competent jurisdiction to recover costs associated with an unauthorized, illegal or delinquent connection, including the cost of water delivered, charges for connection and disconnection, damages and attorney fees; and

(e) the provisions of Subparagraphs (b) and (c) of this paragraph are not applicable to municipalities that have the power to appoint a member to the board; and

(8) adopt an operating budget that supports the full cost of operation, maintenance and replacement as established by an asset management plan and a rate-setting analysis. The operating budget shall be subject to the approval of the department of finance and administration.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 6; 2020, ch. 60, § 3.

### **73-27-7. Authority; powers.**

The authority is a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the state. The authority may:

- A. sue and be sued;
- B. enter into contracts;
- C. borrow money and issue revenue bonds;
- D. acquire, dispose of or encumber real and personal property and any interest in them, including leases, easements and water rights from a willing seller only;
- E. design, develop, construct, operate, maintain, purchase or contract for water systems and pipelines to connect systems and sources with the authority's customers;
- F. be allowed a water use planning period not to exceed forty years and may hold water rights based on a water development plan submitted to and approved by the state engineer the implementation of which shall not exceed forty years from the date of the application to change the place or purpose of use of an acquired water right;
- G. have and exercise the power of eminent domain for the limited purpose of this subsection, within the boundaries of the authority and in Quay county and in the manner provided by law for the condemnation of private property as the last resort for public use



with just compensation. The authority shall not acquire water rights through eminent domain. The authority shall not take any property unless it is necessary for rights of way and easements and for the use and placement of facilities and infrastructure elements, including pipelines, structures, pump stations and related appurtenances;

H. construct and maintain works and establish and maintain facilities across or along any public street or highway and through any vacant public lands that are the property of the state and construct works and establish and maintain facilities across any stream of water or watercourse, all in accordance with applicable state and federal permitting authority;

I. have and exercise all rights and powers necessary or incidental to or implied from the specific powers granted in this section. Such specific powers shall not be considered as a limitation upon any power necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes and intent of the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act; and

J. not have power or rights over any property, infrastructure or operations of a county or municipality that has the power to appoint a member to the board.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 7.

### **73-27-8. Acceptance of assets and liabilities of existing water service providers; acquisition of water rights.**

A. The authority may accept a transfer of assets and liabilities upon the request, and following the legal dissolution, of an entity that is listed below or formed pursuant to one of the following statutes and that provides water service, subject to any other statutory requirements for such dissolution and transfer:

- (1) the Water and Sanitation District Act [Chapter 73, Article 21 NMSA 1978];
- (2) a water and natural gas association formed pursuant to Sections 3-28-1 through 3-28-22 NMSA 1978;
- (3) a water users' association formed pursuant to Sections 73-5-1 through 73-5-9 NMSA 1978;
- (4) the Nonprofit Corporation Act [Chapter 53, Article 8 NMSA 1978];
- (5) the Public Improvement District Act [Chapter 5, Article 11 NMSA 1978];
- (6) a corporation formed pursuant to Sections 62-2-1 through 62-2-22 NMSA 1978, the Business Corporation Act [Chapter 53, Articles 11 to 18 NMSA 1978] or the Cooperative Association Act [Chapter 53, Article 4 NMSA 1978]; or

(7) an association or mutual domestic water consumers association organized pursuant to Laws 1947, Chapter 206, Laws 1949, Chapter 79 or Laws 1951, Chapter 52, as well as any association organized under the provisions of the Sanitary Projects Act [Chapter 3, Article 29 NMSA 1978].

B. Upon the transfer of the assets and liabilities of an entity listed in Subsection A of this section to the authority, the area within the boundaries of the authority serviced by the dissolved entity shall become part of the authority's service area.

C. When a water right is included in the assets and liabilities of an entity listed in Subsection A of this section that are transferred to the authority, or upon the acquisition of a water right by the authority, the authority shall file a change of ownership form with the state engineer and shall apply to the state engineer to combine and commingle the transferred or acquired water right with the authority's existing water rights and contract rights to water.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 8.

### **73-27-9. Revenue bonds; authority to issue; pledge of revenues; limitation on time of issuance.**

A. Revenue bonds may be issued by the authority:

(1) for acquiring real and personal property needed for an authority project, including the purchase of water rights;

(2) for constructing, extending, enlarging, bettering, repairing, equipping or otherwise improving a water project;

(3) for establishing or increasing reasonable reserve or sinking funds to secure the payment of the bonds;

(4) to pay costs of issuance of the bonds;

(5) to refund revenue bonds; or

(6) for any combination of those purposes.

B. The authority may pledge irrevocably any or all of the net revenues from the operation of its water system for payment of the interest on and principal of the revenue bonds.

C. Except for the purpose of refunding previous revenue bond issues, the authority shall not sell revenue bonds payable from pledged revenues after the expiration of two years from the date of the resolution authorizing the issuance of the bonds. However,

any period of time during which a particular revenue bond issue is in litigation shall not be counted in determining the expiration date of that issue.

D. The authority shall not impair the rights of any holders of bonds or other obligations payable from the net revenues of the water system previously issued or incurred by the authority.

E. If required by the terms, covenants and provisions of revenue bonds or other obligations previously issued by the authority, all additional bonds or other obligations issued or incurred by the authority pursuant to the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act shall contain any required terms, covenants or provisions necessary to avoid impairment of the previously issued or incurred bonds or other obligations.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 9.

### **73-27-10. Use of proceeds of revenue bond issue.**

It is unlawful to divert, use or expend any money received from the issuance of revenue bonds for any purpose other than the purpose for which the revenue bonds were issued.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 10.

### **73-27-11. Revenue bonds; terms.**

Revenue bonds:

A. may have interest, appreciated principal value or any part thereof payable at intervals or at maturity as may be determined by the authority;

B. may be subject to prior redemption at the authority's option at such time or times and upon such terms and conditions with or without the payment of such premium or premiums as may be determined by the authority;

C. may mature at any time or times not exceeding forty years after the date of issuance;

D. may be serial in form and maturity or may consist of one bond payable at one time or in installments or may be in such other form as may be determined by the authority;

E. shall be sold for cash at above or below par and at a price that results in a net effective interest rate that does not exceed the maximum permitted by the Public Securities Act [6-14-1 to 6-14-3 NMSA 1978]; and

F. may be sold at public or negotiated sale.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 11.

### **73-27-12. Exemption from taxation.**

The bonds authorized by the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act and the income from the bonds shall be exempt from all taxation by the state or any political subdivision of the state.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 12.

### **73-27-13. Resolution authorizing revenue bonds.**

At a regular or special meeting called for the purpose of issuing revenue bonds, the board may, by an affirmative vote of a supermajority of five members of the board, adopt a resolution that authorizes the issuance of revenue bonds.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 13.

### **73-27-14. Revenue bonds not general obligations; authentication.**

A. Revenue bonds or refunding revenue bonds issued as authorized in the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act are:

- (1) not general obligations of the state or other political subdivision of the state; and
- (2) collectible only from the pledged net revenues of the water system, and each bond shall state that it is payable solely from the pledged net revenues of the water system and that the bondholders shall not look to any other fund of the state or political subdivision of the state for the payment of the interest and principal of the bond.

B. The bonds shall be executed by the chairperson of the board and may be authenticated by the secretary of the board or any public or private transfer agent or registrar or its successor that shall be named or otherwise designated by the board. The bonds may be executed as provided under the Uniform Facsimile Signature of Public Officials Act [6-9-1 to 6-9-6 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 14.

### **73-27-15. Revenue bonds; mandatory rates for the water system; mandamus; impairment of payment.**

A. The authority shall establish rates for services rendered by the water system to provide revenue sufficient to meet the following requirements, and such rates shall remain in effect until the bond issue is liquidated. Revenue shall be sufficient to:

- (1) pay all reasonable expenses of operation of the water system;
- (2) pay all interest on the water system revenue bonds as it comes due;
- (3) provide a sinking fund adequate to discharge the revenue bonds as they mature; and
- (4) provide a capital fund for system improvements and replacements.

B. In the event the authority fails or refuses to establish rates for the water system as required in this section, any bondholder may apply to the district court or courts within which jurisdiction the system is located for a mandatory order requiring the authority to establish rates that will provide revenues adequate to meet the requirements of this section.

C. Any law that authorizes the pledge of any or all of the pledged water system net revenues to the payment of any revenue bonds issued pursuant to the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act or that affects the pledged net revenues of the water system, or any law supplemental to or otherwise appertaining to that act, shall not be repealed or amended or otherwise directly or indirectly modified in such a manner as to impair adversely any such outstanding revenue bonds, unless the outstanding revenue bonds have been discharged in full or provision has been fully made for payment of the bonds.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 15.

### **73-27-16. Bonds; refunding authorization.**

A. At any regular or special meeting called for the purpose of issuing refunding bonds, the board by a supermajority of five members of the board may adopt a resolution authorizing the issuance of the refunding bonds.

B. The authority may issue refunding bonds for the purpose of refinancing, paying and discharging all or any part of outstanding bonds or other obligations payable from the net revenues of the water system previously issued or incurred by the authority.

C. The authority may pledge irrevocably for the payment of interest and principal on refunding bonds the pledged net revenues of the water system.

D. Bonds for refunding and bonds for any purpose permitted by the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act may be issued separately or issued in combination in one series or more.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 16.

### **73-27-17. Refunding bonds; terms.**

#### Refunding bonds:

A. may have interest, appreciated principal value or any part thereof payable at intervals or at maturity as may be determined by the authority;

B. may be subject to prior redemption at the authority's option at such time or times and upon such terms and conditions with or without the payment of premium or premiums as may be determined by the authority;

C. may mature at any time or times not exceeding forty years after the date of issuance;

D. may be serial in form and maturity or may consist of a single bond payable in one or more installments or may be in such other form as may be determined by the authority; and

E. shall be exchanged for the bonds and any matured unpaid interest being refunded at not less than par or sold at public or negotiated sale at, above or below par and at a price that results in a net effective interest rate that does not exceed the maximum permitted by the Public Securities Act [6-14-1 to 6-14-3 NMSA 1978].

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 17.

### **73-27-18. Refunding bonds; escrow.**

A. Refunding bonds issued pursuant to the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act shall be authorized by resolution of the authority. Any bonds that are refunded under the provisions of this section shall be paid at maturity or on any permitted prior redemption date in the amounts, at the time and places and, if called prior to maturity, in accordance with any applicable notice provisions, all as provided in the proceedings authorizing the issuance of the refunded bonds or otherwise pertaining thereto, except for any such bond that is voluntarily surrendered for exchange or payment by the holder or owner.

B. Provision shall be made for paying the bonds refunded at the time provided in this section. The principal amount of the refunding bonds may exceed the principal amount of the refunded bonds and may also be less than or the same as the principal amount of the bonds being refunded; provided that provision is duly and sufficiently made for payment of the refunded bonds.

C. The proceeds of refunding bonds, including any accrued interest and premium pertaining to the sale of refunding bonds, shall either be immediately applied to the retirement of the bonds being refunded or be placed in escrow in a commercial bank or trust company that possesses and is exercising trust powers and that is a member of the federal deposit insurance corporation, to be applied to the payment of the principal of, interest on and any prior redemption premium due in connection with the bonds

being refunded; provided that such refunding bond proceeds, including any accrued interest and any premium pertaining to a sale of refunding bonds, may be applied to the establishment and maintenance of a reserve fund and to the payment of expenses incidental to the refunding and the issuance of the refunding bonds, the interest thereon, the principal thereof or both interest and principal as the authority may determine. Nothing in this section requires the establishment of an escrow if the refunded bonds become due and payable within one year from the date of the refunding bonds and if the amounts necessary to retire the refunded bonds within that time are deposited with the paying agent for the refunded bonds. Any such escrow shall not necessarily be limited to proceeds of refunding bonds but may include other money available for its purpose. Any proceeds in escrow pending such use may be invested or reinvested in bills, certificates of indebtedness, notes or bonds that are direct obligations of or the principal and interest of which obligations are unconditionally guaranteed by the United States or in certificates of deposit of banks that are members of the federal deposit insurance corporation. Such proceeds and investments in escrow, together with any interest or other income to be derived from any such investment, shall be in an amount at all times sufficient as to principal, interest, any prior redemption premium due and any charges of the escrow agent payable to pay the bonds being refunded as they become due at their respective maturities or due at any designated prior redemption date in connection with which the authority shall exercise a prior redemption option. Any purchaser of any refunding bond issued under the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority Act is in no manner responsible for the application of the proceeds by the authority or any of its officers, agents or employees.

D. Refunding bonds may bear such additional terms and provisions as may be determined by the authority subject to the limitations in this section.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 18.

### **73-27-19. Public regulation commission and state engineer jurisdiction.**

A. The authority is not subject to the jurisdiction of the public regulation commission or the terms and provisions of the Public Utility Act [Chapter 62, Articles 1 to 6 and 8 to 13 NMSA 1978] except as provided in Subsection B of this section.

B. The authority may elect by resolution adopted by its board to become subject to the jurisdiction of the public regulation commission and to the terms and provisions of the Public Utility Act; provided, however, that in no event shall Sections 62-9-1 through 62-9-7 NMSA 1978 apply to the authority when making such an election.

C. The authority shall be subject to the rules and regulations of the state engineer and the applicable articles of Chapter 72 NMSA 1978.

**History:** Laws 2010, ch. 39, § 19.

