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§ 5801. Definitions

In this chapter (unless the context otherwise requires):

(1) Board

The term “Board” means the Board of Trustees established under section 5803 of this title.

(2) Department

The term “Department” means the Department of Agriculture.

(3) Foundation

The term “Foundation” means the National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation established by section 5802(a) of this title.

(4) Secretary

The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §352, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1010.)

SHORT TITLE

Section 351 of title III of Pub. L. 104-127 provided that: “This subtitle [subtitle F (§§351-360) of title III of Pub. L. 104-127, enacting this chapter and amending section 1101 of [former] Title 36, Patriotic Societies and Observances] may be cited as the ‘National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation Act.’”

§ 5802. National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation

(a) Establishment

A National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation is established as a charitable and nonprofit corporation for charitable, scientific, and educational purposes specified in subsection (b) of this section. The Foundation is not an agency or instrumentality of the United States.

(b) Duties

The Foundation shall—

(1) promote innovative solutions to the problems associated with the conservation of natural resources on private lands, particularly with respect to agriculture and soil and water conservation;

(2) promote voluntary partnerships between government and private interests in the conservation of natural resources;

(3) conduct research and undertake educational activities, conduct and support demonstration projects, and make grants to State and local agencies and nonprofit organizations;

(4) provide such other leadership and support as may be necessary to address conservation challenges, such as the prevention of excessive soil erosion, the enhancement of soil and water quality, and the protection of wetlands, wildlife habitat, and strategically important farmland subject to urban conversion and fragmentation;

(5) encourage, accept, and administer private gifts of money and real and personal property for the benefit of, or in connection with, the conservation and related activities and services of the Department, particularly the Natural Resources Conservation Service;

(6) undertake, conduct, and encourage educational, technical, and other assistance, and other activities, that support the conservation and related programs administered by the Department (other than activities carried out on National Forest System lands), particularly the Natural Resources Conservation Service, except that the Foundation may not enforce or administer a regulation of the Department; and

(7) raise private funds to promote the purposes of the Foundation.

(c) Limitations and conflicts of interest

(1) Political activities

The Foundation shall not participate or intervene in a political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

(2) Conflicts of interest

No director, officer, or employee of the Foundation shall participate, directly or indirectly, in the consideration or determination of any question before the Foundation affecting—

(A) the financial interests of the director, officer, or employee; or

(B) the interests of any corporation, partnership, entity, organization, or other person in which the director, officer, or employee—

(i) is an officer, director, or trustee; or

(ii) has any direct or indirect financial interest.

(3) Legislation or government action or policy

No funds of the Foundation may be used in any manner for the purpose of influencing legislation or government action or policy.

(4) Litigation

No funds of the Foundation may be used to bring or join an action against the United States.

(Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §353, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1010.)

§ 5803. Composition and operation

(a) Composition

The Foundation shall be administered by a Board of Trustees that shall consist of 9 voting members, each of whom shall be a United States citizen and not a Federal officer. The Board shall be composed of—

(1) individuals with expertise in agricultural conservation policy matters;

(2) a representative of private sector organizations with a demonstrable interest in natural resources conservation;

(3) a representative of statewide conservation organizations;

(4) a representative of soil and water conservation districts;

(5) a representative of organizations outside the Federal Government that are dedicated to natural resources conservation education; and