

An Act

ENROLLED HOUSE
BILL NO. 1588

By: Hardin, Deck, and Alonso-
Sandoval of the House

and

Woods of the Senate

An Act relating to the Oklahoma Conservation Commission; creating the Spring Creek Watershed Study Act; establishing legislative intent; directing Conservation Commission to undertake certain water quality plan; requiring report; providing for cooperation with certain third parties; authorizing the acceptance of certain funds; creating the Spring Creek Watershed Study Cash Fund Revolving Fund; establishing fund purpose; providing source of funds; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

SUBJECT: Oklahoma Conservation Commission

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-7-111 of Title 27A, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Spring Creek Watershed Study Act".

B. The Legislature finds that:

1. Increasing pressure from agriculture and residential development as well as stream bank erosion and other activities have led to declining water quality levels in the Northeast Oklahoma watershed known as Spring Creek located in Cherokee, Delaware, and Mayes counties near Kansas, Oklahoma, resulting in increased concern

by the residents of the Spring Creek area and citizens of Oklahoma as a whole as to the continued health of the watershed. The once pristine stream is a prime example of how many similar high quality Ozark waterbodies that draw millions of visitors to the area each year, support water supplies for growing urban centers in Oklahoma, and provide habitat for important wildlife and fisheries resources are threatened without cooperative, voluntary protective action by local communities and other stakeholders;

2. Improved voluntary land management practices including soil conservation practices, riparian restoration and protection, reforestation, streambank livestock exclusion, and other methods of stewardship have great potential to improve and protect the quality of water in the Spring Creek watershed while improving the ecological health of the area; and

3. It is in the interest of the citizens of this state as a whole and the residents of the Spring Creek watershed that the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, in partnership with other local, state, and federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations, undertake a comprehensive water quality study of Spring Creek to determine the best course of action to protect and improve the health of the aquatic habitat in the watershed.

C. It is the intent of the Legislature that the findings of this study will be used to direct implementation of voluntary, incentive-based conservation practices by the Commission in partnership with other local, state, and federal agencies and subject to availability of resources, in the Spring Creek watershed to protect and improve the aquatic habitat and water quality in the area.

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-7-112 of Title 27A, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. 1. The Oklahoma Conservation Commission shall undertake a comprehensive watershed-based water quality plan designed to improve and protect the water quality and aquatic habitat in the Spring Creek watershed through the utilization of voluntary, incentive-based programs.

2. On or before June 1, 2026, the Commission shall publish an electronic report of the findings. The Commission may, from time to

time, update such findings as conditions change and pertinent information becomes available.

B. The Commission may contract and cooperate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conduct activities provided for in this section.

C. The Commission may apply for and accept grants, gifts, or other sources of public and private funds to carry out the purposes of the Spring Creek Watershed Study Act.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-7-113 of Title 27A, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission to be designated the "Spring Creek Watershed Study Cash Fund Revolving Fund". The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall consist of all monies received by the Commission from appropriations by the Legislature to the fund, and any money received as gifts, grants, or other contributions from public or private sources provided for the purpose of implementing the Spring Creek Watershed Study Act. All monies accruing to the credit of the fund are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted and expended by the Commission for the purpose provided for in this act. Expenditures from the fund shall be made upon warrants issued by the State Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by law with the Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for approval and payment.

SECTION 4. This act shall become effective November 1, 2025.

Passed the House of Representatives the 4th day of March, 2025.

Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

Passed the Senate the 1st day of May, 2025.

Presiding Officer of the Senate

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Received by the Office of the Governor this _____
day of _____, 20_____, at _____ o'clock _____ M.
By: _____

Approved by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma this _____
day of _____, 20_____, at _____ o'clock _____ M.

Governor of the State of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Received by the Office of the Secretary of State this _____
day of _____, 20_____, at _____ o'clock _____ M.
By: _____