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# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## RULES GOVERNING CONSERVATION DISTRICTS – TITLE 2

### PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

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Commenter Name: Jeanette Hale, President, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts Employees

Comment:

Regarding the proposed changes in Title 2, I have the following comments:

Section 201.3: Definitions: District funds are not defined.

Section 207.2: (D) There is no definition of district funds as opposed to "operating funds" or "local funds" as is listed in definitions

Section 209.5: Inventory: (C) Assets that were purchased with funds generated by the District and not by means of a state grant, should be exempt from needing approval of the Department before disposing of that asset.,,

Division and Commission Response: Comments provided are focused on portions of the rules that were not modified as a result of the 2023 session. Rule changes considered for public comment are a direct result of legislation changes, with some general clean up. **No changes are recommended.**

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Commenter Name: Debbie Moreland, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts

Comment:

Here are some of the comments we wish to be included.

1) We are concerned about the elimination of the District Director Emeritus designation and want assurances that AACD can continue to bestow this recognition on past conservation district leaders. It will have no financial impact on ADA or the state.

2) We would like to see clarification on the definition of district funds as opposed to other references within the revisions such as "operating funds" and/or "local funds". Any action to reduce or eliminate state appropriations to districts are unacceptable given the tasks and responsibilities that local districts maintain.

3) Several of our districts have expressed concern regarding assets such as equipment, buildings, or any financial assets acquired which are not the result of state dollars. We believe those assets belong to the local conservation district, a local entity of government, and should not be taken without full consent of the district.

4) Any future potential changes and/or revisions to conservation district law or programs should be discussed with conservation districts prior to seeking legislation or enacting changes. It is difficult to maintain a strong working partnership without open transparent communication between all entities.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments.

Division and Commission Response: In response to the comment concerning the district emeritus program, the program still exists through the governing board of the conservation districts. All other comments are general statements and are not tied to specific rule changes out for public comment. **No changes are recommended.**