

---

## DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

---

HB 686 Original

2022 Regular Session

Mincey

**Abstract:** Modifies management of the Amite River Basin.

Present law establishes the geographical bounds of the district. Proposed law retains present law and provides that the district shall also be comprised of all portions of the geographical area within the watershed limits of the Amite River and Tributaries Basin located in those parts of Iberville, Ascension, and St. James Parishes south of La. Hwy. 61 and not particularly described in present law.

Proposed law further provides that by Jan. 1, 2023, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority in consultation with the office of state lands must submit to the legislature a detailed legal description of the Amite River and Tributaries Basin.

Present law provides that the management and control of the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District is vested in a board of commissioners for the district. Further provides for the board's authority to establish adequate drainage, flood control, and water resources development to include but not be limited to construction of reservoirs, diversion canals, gravity and pumped drainage systems, and other flood control works. Proposed law retains present law and adds a requirement that the board comprehensively manage the district as a single system.

Present law provides for a 13 person commission. Proposed law retains present law. Present law provides that one member from the district is appointed by the governor and serves at large. Proposed law provides that six members be appointed by the governor to serve at large. Further provides that commissioners at large will serve four year terms staggered with three positions expiring every two years; initial terms shall be two years for three commissioners and four years for three commissioners; be subject to senate confirmation, from nominations submitted by the representatives and senators whose districts include any portion of the district. Specifies that nominees are encouraged to but need not reside in the district or any particular parish within it. Specifies that each legislator may nominate up to two persons meeting the qualification requirements, per vacant position. Specifies that if no nominees meeting the qualification requirements are submitted for a seat, the governor may choose his own. Further provides that all six commissioners at large must have at least 10 years of professional experience in their discipline, of which at least four must be engineers or professionals in a drainage-related field such as geotechnical, hydrological, or environmental science. Specifies that parish commissioner designees are encouraged to be, but need not be, professionals.

Proposed law requires the board to post agendas for all meetings on its website at least twenty four

hours prior to meetings and to stream all district meetings live on the internet.

Present law requires the Dept. of Transportation and Development to provide advice and technical assistance to the board. Proposed law retains present law and adds advice and technical assistance from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority upon request.

Present law provides for the general powers and duties of the board. Proposed law retains present law and adds a requirement that prior to Jan. 1, 2026, the board must promulgate regulations for watershed management within the district, insofar as they affect watershed management, that address the following:

- (1) Planning.
- (2) Permitting.
- (3) Selection of and performing projects.
- (4) Resolution of conflicts among agencies.
- (5) Use of best available science.
- (6) Outreach to the public and agencies.
- (7) Coordination with state agencies and political subdivisions regarding watershed management.
- (8) Identifying, seeking, receiving, and expending federal and other funding for planning and projects.
- (9) Providing assistance to political subdivisions in planning, designing and constructing projects, and identifying and obtaining funding.
- (10) Agreements with public and private entities to identify, seek, receive, and expend funds.
- (11) Maintaining projects once complete.
- (12) Providing an appeal process.
- (13) Defining qualifications for staff and contractors.

Present law grants the board authority to construct and maintain drainage works of all types either in cooperation with one or more parishes, municipalities, drainage districts, or other special districts within its territorial jurisdiction or upon its own undertaking. Proposed law retains present law and adds a requirement that projects receive approval of two thirds of the total voting membership. Further adds that technical aspects of projects, including planning and permitting decisions, require approval by a simple majority of the total voting membership.

Proposed law requires the board to develop and implement a plan to manage all waterways in the district in relation to matters impacting watershed management in the district.

Proposed law requires the board to develop a master plan.

Proposed law requires the board to develop annual plans and report annually to a committee of representatives and senators whose districts include any portion of the Amite River Basin.

Proposed law requires the board to consider to what extent matters regarding an agreement with the state of Mississippi regarding watershed management and how it may be beneficial to management

of the basin in Louisiana, and authorizes them to contract with the state of Mississippi for such purposes including for doing projects, subject to approval by the governor.

Present law provides for voting on taxes levied by the board to be by individual parish. Proposed law provides for voting on such taxes by everyone in the district as a whole.

(Amends R.S. 38:3302, 3303(B), (C), and (D), 3305(Section heading), 3306(A) and (C), 3307(C), and 3309; Adds R.S. 38:3301(C), 3303(E) and (F), 3304(C)(3), 3306(G), (H), (I), and (J), and 3307(E))