

**Second Regular Session  
Seventieth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**PREAMENDED**

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee  
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 16-1095.01 Jennifer Berman x3286

**SENATE BILL 16-145**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Baumgardner and Donovan**, Roberts, Scott

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Mitsch Bush and Willett**, Becker K., Brown, Coram, Hamner, Rankin, Thurlow

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**Senate Committees**

Agriculture, Natural Resources, & Energy

**House Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING AN ALTERNATIVE MECHANISM FOR CREATING A**  
102                    **SUBDISTRICT OF THE COLORADO RIVER WATER CONSERVATION**  
103                    **DISTRICT.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://www.leg.state.co.us/bills summaries>.)*

The Colorado river water conservation district's (district) 1937 organic act provides a mechanism for the creation of a subdistrict within the 15-county district that requires a petition signed by 50% of the property owners of the proposed subdistrict to be presented to, and approved by, a court which may then declare the subdistrict formed.

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.  
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.*

Because of changes in the amount and type of property ownership over the years, the 50% signature threshold is no longer practical.

The bill provides an alternative mechanism to petition for the organization of a subdistrict of the district. Following initial approval of the board of directors, including unanimous approval of the directors representing the geographic area that would be covered by the proposed subdistrict, the petition must include the signatures of the lesser of 10% or 200 electors of the geographic area covered by the proposed subdistrict. The petition must then be presented to a court for approval at a hearing, and, upon approval, is put to a vote at a districtwide election. If a majority of the votes are in favor of the formation of the proposed subdistrict, the court shall declare the subdistrict formed.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 37-46-102, amend  
3 (5) as follows:

4 **37-46-102. Definitions.** As used in this article, unless the context  
5 otherwise requires:

6 (5) "Subdistrict" or "subdivision" ~~embraces and includes the kind~~  
7 or character of special improvement districts created under the provisions  
8 of this article, including subdistricts organized under the name and style  
9 of "Water Users' Association No. .... of the Colorado River Water  
10 Conservation District" and "Special Improvement District No. .... of the  
11 Colorado River Water Conservation District". A subdistrict or subdivision  
12 is a body corporate and politic and a political subdivision of the state of  
13 Colorado. A SUBDISTRICT OR SUBDIVISION DOES NOT HAVE REGULATORY  
14 AUTHORITY OVER A WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, WATER  
15 CONSERVANCY DISTRICT, IRRIGATION DISTRICT, OR OTHER WATER USER  
16 OUTSIDE ITS GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES; HOWEVER, A SUBDISTRICT OR  
17 SUBDIVISION MAY ENTER INTO A VOLUNTARY CONTRACT, STIPULATION, OR  
18 OTHER AGREEMENT WITH A WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, WATER  
19 CONSERVANCY DISTRICT, IRRIGATION DISTRICT, OR OTHER WATER USER

1 OUTSIDE ITS GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES.

2 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 37-46-114.5 as  
3 follows:

4 **37-46-114.5. Alternative procedure for organizing a**  
5 **subdistrict.** (1) (a) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROCESS FOR CREATING A  
6 SUBDISTRICT ESTABLISHED IN SECTIONS 37-46-112 TO 37-46-114, A  
7 PETITION FOR AN ELECTION ON THE ORGANIZATION OF A SUBDISTRICT MAY  
8 BE FILED WITH THE CLERK OF THE COURT THAT HAS JURISDICTION OVER  
9 ALL OR PART OF THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA TO BE REPRESENTED BY THE  
10 PROPOSED SUBDISTRICT. THE PETITION MUST BE:

11 (I) DULY APPROVED BY THE DISTRICT'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS;

12 (II) APPROVED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE  
13 DISTRICT'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS WHO WERE APPOINTED BY THE COUNTIES  
14 THAT LIE WHOLLY OR PARTIALLY WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE  
15 PROPOSED SUBDISTRICT; AND

16 (III) SIGNED BY AT LEAST THE LESSER OF TEN PERCENT OR TWO  
17 HUNDRED OF THE ELECTORS LIVING IN THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA TO BE  
18 REPRESENTED BY THE PROPOSED SUBDISTRICT.

19 (b) THE PETITION MUST INCLUDE:

20 (I) THE NAME OF THE PROPOSED SUBDISTRICT;

21 (II) A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED  
22 SUBDISTRICT CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION

23 37-46-112. THE DESCRIPTION NEED NOT BE GIVEN BY MEASUREMENTS  
24 AND BOUNDARIES OR BY LEGAL SUBDIVISION, BUT IT MUST BE SUFFICIENT  
25 TO ENABLE A PROPERTY OWNER TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE PROPERTY  
26 OWNER'S PROPERTY IS WITHIN THE TERRITORY PROPOSED TO BE  
27 ORGANIZED AS A SUBDISTRICT. IF THE PROPOSED SUBDISTRICT IS INTENDED

1 TO PROMOTE ONE OR MORE OF THE PURPOSES SET FORTH IN SECTION  
2 37-46-101, THE TERRITORY OF THE SUBDISTRICT NEED NOT BE  
3 CONTIGUOUS. THE BOUNDARY OF THE PROPOSED SUBDISTRICT MAY  
4 INCLUDE ALL OR ANY PART OF ANY CITY, COUNTY, OR CITY AND COUNTY,  
5 REGARDLESS OF SIZE.

6 (III) A STATEMENT WHETHER ANY PART OF THE PROPOSED  
7 SUBDISTRICT IS INCLUDED WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF AN EXISTING  
8 SUBDISTRICT ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS ARTICLE AND, IF SO, A GENERAL  
9 DESCRIPTION OF THE OVERLAPPING GEOGRAPHIC AREA;

10 (IV) A GENERAL DESIGNATION OF ANY SUBDIVISIONS OF THE  
11 SUBDISTRICT AND THE NUMBER OF DIRECTORS PROPOSED FOR EACH  
12 SUBDIVISION; AND

13 (V) A FORMAL REQUEST FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE  
14 SUBDISTRICT BY THE NAME PROPOSED AND A REQUEST TO HOLD AN  
15 ELECTION ON THE QUESTION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SUBDISTRICT.

16 (2) (a) (I) ON THE DAY FIXED FOR A HEARING ON THE PETITION, OR  
17 AT A CONTINUANCE OF THE HEARING DATE, THE COURT SHALL FIRST  
18 ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE REQUIREMENTS OF SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS  
19 SECTION HAVE BEEN SATISFIED.

20 ==  
21 (II) THE COURT SHALL NOT DECLARE A PETITION WITH THE  
22 REQUISITE SIGNATURES VOID ON ACCOUNT OF ALLEGED DEFECTS IN THE  
23 PETITION, BUT MAY REQUIRE THE PETITION TO BE AMENDED AT ANY TIME  
24 TO CORRECT ANY ERRORS, INCLUDING AN ERROR IN THE DESCRIPTION OF  
25 THE TERRITORY. IF DUPLICATE OR SIMILAR PETITIONS FOR THE  
26 ORGANIZATION OF A SUBDISTRICT ARE FILED BEFORE A HEARING IS HELD  
27 ON THE FIRST PETITION FILED, THE COURT SHALL REGARD THE FIRST AND

1 ANY DUPLICATE OR SIMILAR PETITIONS AS ONE PETITION.

2 (III) IF, AT THE HEARING, IT APPEARS THAT THE PETITION FOR THE  
3 ORGANIZATION OF A SUBDISTRICT HAS BEEN SIGNED AND PRESENTED IN  
4 CONFORMITY WITH THIS SECTION AND THAT THE CLAIMS OF THE PETITION  
5 ARE TRUE, THE COURT, BY ORDER ENTERED INTO THE RECORD, SHALL  
6 DIRECT THAT THE QUESTION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SUBDISTRICT  
7 BE SUBMITTED AT AN ELECTION WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE  
8 PROPOSED SUBDISTRICT TO BE HELD FOR THAT PURPOSE IN ACCORDANCE  
9 WITH THE LAWS OF THIS STATE FOR CONDUCTING A GENERAL ELECTION OR  
10 A SPECIAL ELECTION HELD ON THE FIRST TUESDAY IN NOVEMBER OF AN  
11 ODD-NUMBERED YEAR.

12 (b) AT AN ELECTION ON THE ORGANIZATION OF A SUBDISTRICT, A  
13 VOTER MAY VOTE FOR OR AGAINST THE ORGANIZATION OF THE  
14 SUBDISTRICT. IF A MAJORITY OF THE VOTES CAST AT THE ELECTION ARE IN  
15 FAVOR OF THE ORGANIZATION OF A SUBDISTRICT, THE COURT SHALL  
16 DECLARE THE SUBDISTRICT ORGANIZED AND GIVE IT THE CORPORATE  
17 NAME DESIGNATED IN THE PETITION, BY WHICH NAME IT WILL BE KNOWN  
18 FOR ALL PROCEEDINGS. UPON ORGANIZATION OF THE SUBDISTRICT, THE  
19 SUBDISTRICT WILL BE A BODY CORPORATE AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF  
20 THE STATE OF COLORADO WITH ALL OF THE POWERS AFFORDED TO \_\_\_ A  
21 SUBDISTRICT OR SUBDIVISION BY THIS ARTICLE.

22 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 37-46-112, **amend**  
23 (1) as follows:

24 **37-46-112. Petition.** (1) EXCEPT AS SPECIFIED IN SECTION  
25 37-46-114.5, before any subdistrict is established under this article, a  
26 petition shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the district court of the  
27 county in which the territory to be ~~embraced~~ INCLUDED in ~~said~~ THE

1 subdistrict, or the greater part thereof OF THE TERRITORY is situate  
2 LOCATED, signed by the board of directors of the district or by a majority  
3 of the owners of land situate LOCATED within the limits of the territory  
4 proposed to be organized into a subdistrict.

5 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 37-46-113, **amend**  
6 (1) as follows:

7 **37-46-113. Notice of hearing on petition.** (1) Immediately after  
8 the filing of ~~such~~ A petition CREATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 37-46-112,  
9 the court, ~~wherein such petition is filed,~~ by order, shall fix a place and  
10 time, not less than sixty days nor more than ninety days after the petition  
11 is filed, for A hearing ~~thereon~~ ON THE PETITION, and ~~thereupon~~ the clerk  
12 of ~~said~~ THE court shall ~~cause~~ PROVIDE notice by publication, which may  
13 be substantially the same as provided in section 37-8-101, ~~to be made of~~  
14 ~~the pendency~~ of the petition and of the time and place of the hearing  
15 ~~thereon~~ ON THE PETITION. The clerk of ~~said~~ THE court shall also ~~forthwith~~  
16 ~~cause a copy of said~~ MAIL THE notice ~~to be mailed~~ by United States  
17 registered mail to the board of county commissioners of each of the  
18 ~~several~~ counties having territory within the proposed subdistrict and, IF  
19 THE PETITION IS FILED BY LANDOWNERS, AND NOT BY THE BOARD OF  
20 DIRECTORS, to the board of directors of ~~said~~ THE district. ~~in the event that~~  
21 ~~said petition is filed by the landowners.~~

22 **SECTION 5.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 37-46-114, **amend**  
23 (1) as follows:

24 **37-46-114. Protesting of petitions.** (1) ~~At any time~~ After the  
25 filing of a petition for the organization of a subdistrict PURSUANT TO  
26 SECTION 37-46-112, ~~and not less than~~ A WRITTEN PROTEST OBJECTING TO  
27 THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SUBDISTRICT MAY BE FILED WITH THE COURT

1       CLERK UP TO thirty days ~~prior to~~ BEFORE the ~~time fixed by the order of the~~  
2       court for the DATE FOR THE hearing ~~upon said~~ ON THE petition, and BUT  
3       not thereafter, a protest may be filed in the office of the clerk of the court  
4       ~~wherein the proceedings for the organization of such subdistrict is~~  
5       ~~pending~~, AFTER THE DATE OF THE HEARING. THE PROTEST MUST BE signed  
6       by a majority of the ~~owners of the land~~ LANDOWNERS in ~~said~~ THE  
7       proposed subdistrict. ~~protesting the organization or creation of said~~  
8       ~~subdistrict. It is the duty of~~ The clerk of the court ~~forthwith, upon filing~~  
9       ~~of said protest, to~~ SHALL THEN make as many certified copies ~~thereof~~ OF  
10      THE WRITTEN PROTEST, including the signatures, ~~thereto~~, as there are  
11      counties into any part of which ~~said~~ THE proposed subdistrict extends and  
12      ~~forthwith to place in the hands of~~ PROVIDE A COPY TO the county treasurer  
13      of each of ~~such~~ THE counties. ~~one of said certified copies.~~

14               **SECTION 6. Act subject to petition - effective date -**  
15      **applicability.** (1) This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following  
16      the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the  
17      general assembly (August 10, 2016, if adjournment sine die is on May 11,  
18      2016); except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1  
19      (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section,  
20      or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part  
21      will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election  
22      to be held in November 2016 and, in such case, will take effect on the  
23      date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

24               (2) This act applies to petitions filed on or after the applicable  
25      effective date of this act.