

Article 7A.

Maintenance.

**§ 156-93.1. Maintenance assessments and contracts; engineering assistance, construction equipment, etc.; joint or consolidated maintenance operations; water-retardant structures; borrowing in anticipation of revenue.**

(a) The board of drainage commissioners may annually levy maintenance assessments in the same ratio as the existing classification of the lands within the district. The amount of these assessments shall be determined by the board of drainage commissioners of the district. The proceeds of these assessments shall be used for the purpose of maintaining canals of the drainage district in an efficient operating condition and for the necessary operating expenses of the district. Notice of the meeting at which the board of drainage commissioners determines the amount of the annual levy shall be mailed to the owners, as shown on the county tax records, of all property subject to assessment, or shall be published once a week for two successive calendar weeks in a newspaper having general circulation in the area. The notice shall be sent or published not more than 30 days nor less than 10 days prior to the meeting, and shall state the time, place, and purposes of the meeting. Any interested person has the right to be heard at the meeting prior to the drainage commissioners taking any action on the proposed assessment. In the event that any interested and aggrieved party disagrees with the said assessment, he may, within 20 days of the mailing of the notice of the assessment, file with the clerk for the county wherein the proceeding is pending, a notice specifically setting forth his objection. The Secretary of the District shall file in the records of the proceeding a certification setting forth the date of the mailing of the notice of the annual maintenance assessments. The clerk shall thereupon notify the senior resident superior court judge of such district who shall set the objection down for hearing at the earliest possible time. The court shall hear the matter upon the objections duly set forth in the notice of objection.

The board of drainage commissioners shall have the authority to employ engineering assistance, construction equipment, superintendents and operators for the equipment necessary for the efficient maintenance of the canals, or the maintenance may be done by private contract made after due advertisement as required for the original construction work.

(b) The board of drainage commissioners of a drainage district may join with the commissioners of one or more districts for the purpose of employing engineering assistance, equipment, superintendents and equipment operators for the maintenance of the canals in the several districts desiring to coordinate their maintenance operations and the drainage districts desiring to coordinate a common maintenance force may have a common office with the necessary employees for the furtherance of the joint operations for maintenance. The districts may coordinate their work without regard to county lines.

(c) The board of commissioners of a drainage district may, individually or jointly with the commissioners of other drainage districts, purchase, lease, rent, sell, or otherwise dispose of at public or private sale, equipment for the original construction or maintenance of the canals in the individual or joint districts or the said drainage districts may make contracts with private construction firms for the maintenance and construction of their canals. Contracts made with private construction companies are to be advertised as provided for the contract for the original construction of the canals.

The drainage districts may use the equipment owned by them for the purpose of maintenance of the canals and the construction of extensions to the system of canals in the individual or several drainage districts.

(d) The drainage districts desiring to consolidate their maintenance services and equipment may set up a board composed of one member from each district for the purpose of control and use of the personnel and equipment employed on a joint basis, and in all matters coming before the joint board, the representative of each district shall have a voting strength equal to the proportionate acreage of his drainage district as compared with the total acreage of the combined districts.

(e) The collection of the annual maintenance assessments shall be made by the county tax collector. The board of county commissioners of the county in which a drainage district is located shall upon the request of the board of drainage commissioners of the said district cause to be shown on the tax statement or notice issued by the county to its taxpayers the amount due the drainage district by the landowners in the same manner as other special assessments are shown thereon. This amount shall be collected by the county tax collector in the same manner as county taxes and deposited to the credit of the district in which the land is located.

(f) The provisions for maintenance as set forth in this Article and elsewhere in this Subchapter III shall include water-retardant structures and the operation of such.

(g) The board of commissioners may borrow money in anticipation of revenue from maintenance assessments, as hereinbefore provided for, from which assessments the loan shall be repaid. The amount which the commissioners may borrow shall not be limited to the revenues anticipated for any one year. The terms and provisions of such loan shall be approved by the clerk of the superior court which approval shall be requested in the form of a petition and order in the proceeding by virtue of which the district was organized. The proceeds of said loan shall be used only for purposes set forth in Article 7A of Chapter 156. (1949, c. 1216; 1959, c. 597, s. 4; 1961, c. 614, s. 8; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 959, s. 4; 1991, c. 634.)