

Bill doesn't do enough to return control to water districts

Published Tuesday, March 6, 2012

Only with this governor and Legislature does a watered-down assault on local control and the environment count as a victory. A Senate bill approved last month and now part of this week's endgame with the House would restore some of last year's budget cuts to the state's five water management districts. The districts need the money, but the trade-off is unacceptable. The bill gives more authority over water policy to the same governor who caused the districts' financial free fall in the first place, and it enables Tallahassee to continue to hijack local water for political purposes.

The measure, SB 1986, marks an election-year attempt by the Republican-led Legislature to distance itself from the deep cuts it imposed on the water agencies last year. The caps in revenue cost the five water management agencies a combined \$700 million and forced the layoff of hundreds of employees, including the most experienced hydrologists in the state. This year's bill is part apology, and also a realization that the state cannot meet its water supply and flood control needs — much less invest for the future — with a revenue base that is fundamentally inadequate.

It is understandable that some environmentalists support the legislation, because it would put the water management agencies on sounder financial footing. And the Senate stripped out several provisions that would have made it easier for the Legislature to prevent the water management districts from regulating big water users such as developers and utilities. But the bill would enable lawmakers to interfere early and often as the districts shape their spending plans. And Gov. Rick Scott would have more authority over direct spending — having the power, for example, to approve any budget transfers at the agencies greater than \$1 million. This level of micromanaging undermines the purpose of regulating the state's distinct watersheds at the regional level. And it amounts to a political shot from Tallahassee aimed at keeping local officials in line.

Legislators could amend the bill — for better or for worse — but really, why bother? The sound course is the simplest one: Repeal last year's law, withdraw the spending caps and put the districts in charge of their own budgets. Scott boxed himself and legislative leaders into a corner with last year's cuts. He should not be rewarded with more revenue that makes it even easier for the governor and Legislature to collude over the use of the state's most precious resource. The focus should be on preserving local control. This governor and Legislature already recognize the need for more money.

From: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>
Subject: House passes bill repealing septic tank inspection requirement
Date: February 29, 2012 9:08:15 PM EST
To: Jack Sullivan <jesull@comcast.net>
Reply-To: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>
To: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 29, 2012 9:07 PM
Subject: House passes bill repealing septic tank inspection requirement

House passes bill repealing septic tank inspection requirement
Bruce Ritchie, 02/29/2012 - 01:28 PM

The Florida House on Wednesday approved a bill that would repeal a statewide septic tanks inspection requirement.

The Legislature in 2010 passed a requirement for statewide septic tank inspections, but the measure prompted a backlash from rural residents who viewed it as a government intrusion. The House passed a repeal bill in 2011 but the Senate did not take up the measure.

This year, **HB 999** by **Rep. Chris Dorworth**, R-Lake Mary, attempted to strike a compromise with the Senate by requiring inspections in 19 counties with the largest first-magnitude springs, which each discharge more than 64 million gallons per day.

The bill establishes restrictions on local inspection programs, and it allows those counties with first-magnitude springs to opt out of the inspections. That drew opposition from some Democrats on the House floor. **Sierra Club Florida** also remains opposed to the bill.

"When it comes to first-magnitude springs I don't think we ought to be looking at the opportunity to opt out," said **Rep. Rick Kriseman**, D-St. Petersburg. "I think we ought to be doing everything we can to protect those springs."

But supporters said Dorworth had worked on a complicated issue to address the concerns of a variety of interests. Bill supporters included the **Florida Home Builders Association**, **Florida Realtors**, **Associated Industries of Florida**, the **Florida Onsite Wastewater Association** and **Audubon of Florida**.

"Today I think everyone wins," said **Rep. Marti Coley**, R-Marianna. "Our citizens who told us, 'You, government, have overstepped your bounds,' we heard them and stepped back."

The bill passed 105-11 and now goes to the Senate. The Senate version of the bill, **SB 820**, is in its final committee stop.

Reporter Bruce Ritchie can be reached at britchie@thefloridacurrent.com.

From: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>
Subject: Fwd: St. Johns River Water Management District Water News
Date: February 15, 2012 8:00:33 AM EST
To: Jack Sullivan <jesull@comcast.net>

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: WaterNews <waternews@sjrwmd.com>
Date: February 15, 2012 7:53:04 AM EST
To: "disalz@yahoo.com" <disalz@yahoo.com>
Subject: St. Johns River Water Management District Water News

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St. Johns River Water Management District Water News

News, meetings
and notices

February 15, 2012

Water Supply Impact Study released

The St. Johns River Water Management District has **released its report** on the St. John River Water Supply Impact Study, the most comprehensive and scientifically rigorous analysis of the St. Johns River ever conducted.

The **four-year study** resulted in the development of state-of-the-art models and methodologies that can be used in consumptive use permitting, minimum flows and levels development, regional water projects and water supply planning. The tools developed through the study will be applied during the review process for any future river water withdrawal permit applications. The amount of water that may ultimately be withdrawn will depend on the proposed location, design and timing of the withdrawal and numerous permitting criteria that are considered when a permit application is submitted. These tools also can be used by local governments, other agencies, and potentially with other river systems.

Assistant Executive Director announces retirement

After more than 30 years of water resources experience, **David W. Fisk** has announced his retirement, effective March 9. Fisk joined the District in February 2002 and has served as

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About us

The St. Johns River Water Management District is a regional agency of the state of Florida whose mission is to protect and ensure the sustainable use of water resources.

assistant executive director since June 2003.

Fisk's varied and extensive experience includes responsibilities for the direction of staff, budget, water use and wetlands permitting, water resources research, environmental restoration, planning, land acquisition, administration, operations, and legislative and interagency coordination. Prior to joining the St. Johns District, Fisk was assistant executive director at the Suwannee River Water Management District, where his duties included acting as a liaison between state and federal governmental bodies and the District.

District General Counsel **William H. Congdon**, who has worked at the District for 15 years, will serve as interim assistant executive director. Congdon has been a member of the Florida Bar for more than 30 years and has been the lead attorney representing the District in federal court, state court, and in hearings before the Department of Administrative Hearings. Congdon will continue to fill the role of general counsel while handling the assistant executive director's duties until a replacement for Fisk is hired.

The District is also currently recruiting for a **chief financial and administrative services officer**. The position, which reports to the District's Executive Director, will be responsible for the offices of Finance and Administration, Budget and Management Reporting and Human Resources.

Florida Water StarSM program now offered statewide

The District's residential water conservation program — **Florida Water StarSM** — is **now offered statewide**, bringing the economic and environmental benefits of water efficiency to homeowners in all of Florida's 67 counties.

The Florida Green Building Coalition recently agreed to administer the program in the Suwannee River and Northwest Florida water management districts — the two remaining regions where Florida Water StarSM had not yet been available. The St. Johns River, South Florida and Southwest Florida water management districts administer the program within their **respective boundaries**.

Minimum flows and levels (MFLs) meeting scheduled for March

The District will hold a public meeting in March to discuss **MFLs prevention and recovery strategies** for water bodies in northeast Florida.

The **Clay-Putnam** technical work group will meet at 2 p.m. on March 15 at Trinity Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 3716 S.E. State Road 21, Keystone Heights. Parking for meeting attendees is available on the south end of the complex, near the playground. The Clay-Putnam work group was formed to

The District is responsible for managing groundwater and surface water resources in all or part of 18 counties in northeast and east-central Florida.

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develop a list of prevention and recovery strategies for lakes Geneva, Brooklyn, Cowpen and Grandin.

Stakeholder meetings are being held in areas where **MFLs** are currently not being met or are projected not to be met within 20 years. The District's goal is to work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop long-term comprehensive strategies to achieve the MFLs.

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From: Tampa Bay Water <mrapp@tampabaywater.org>
Subject: Water News from Tampa Bay Water
Date: December 22, 2011 4:08:09 PM EST
To: Jack <wrwsa@wrwsa.org>
Reply-To: Tampa Bay Water <mrapp@tampabaywater.org>

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DECEMBER 2011

WATER NEWS

SURFACE WATER SYSTEM EXPANSION COMPLETED



At the end of fiscal year 2011, Tampa Bay Water completed the last of 10 projects that adds an average of 25 million gallons of capacity per day to our surface water system. The projects included modifying the Tampa Bypass Canal water use permit to allow capture of additional wet weather flows, expanding the Tampa Bypass Canal Pump station, expanding the Tampa Bay Regional Surface Water Plant and High Service Pump Station, building two new pump stations to convey increased flows to and from the C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir and new pipeline interconnections.

The approved construction budget for expansion projects was \$212.2 million; to date, project managers have saved approximately \$27.6 million through competitive procurement practices, the agency's tax savings program and contract under-runs. To date, the Southwest Florida Water Management District has co-funded \$119.7 million of the program cost.

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UTILITY WINS AWARD FOR EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATION



Gold MarCom Award Winner

Tampa Bay Water received the Gold MarCom Award for "Go with the Flow," an educational booklet on water supplies for middle-school students of the Tampa Bay region. The booklet was created for the *St. Petersburg Times*' Newspaper in Education initiative to teach local students and their families about the source of our water supplies, and how those supplies can be conserved and protected.

Tampa Bay Water was selected to receive the award from over 6,000 MarCom Award entries from throughout the United States, Canada and several other countries. MarCom Awards is administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals. Entries are judged by industry professionals who are looking for publications that exhibit high standards of excellence and serve as benchmarks for the industry.

SUIT AGAINST RESERVOIR DESIGNER RE-OPENED



Tampa Bay Water is continuing its legal case against HDR Engineering, Inc., the engineer of record that designed the regional reservoir. The case was re-opened on Nov. 16, 2011, after Tampa Bay Water unanimously rejected a \$30 million mediator's proposed settlement agreement and filed a motion to reopen the case. On Dec. 2, 2011, the Court entered another order reactivating all of the motions that were pending immediately before the case was dismissed, and directing the parties to respond to those motions by Dec. 15, 2011.

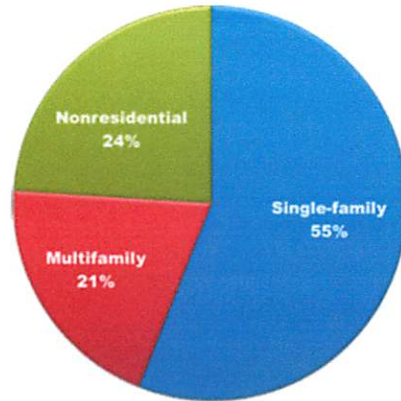
On Dec. 13, 2011, the Court denied HDR's motion to enforce the Mediator's proposal.

BOARD APPROVES DESALINATION RELIABILITY PROGRAM

At its December meeting, Tampa Bay Water's board of directors authorized staff to implement several tasks that will strengthen the desalination plant and improve its reliability. The desalination plant works as intended and has met all performance milestones, but some equipment that has been in place since 2002 must be replaced and improvements must be made to ensure continued smooth operations. The \$3.6 million program will add a fourth seawater pump and a new

transformer, replace the 2nd pass membranes which have been in place since 2002, and replace the inlet and discharge piping. Improving the seawater desalination plant's reliability ensures that it will continue to operate when needed.

WATER DEMAND FORECAST UPDATED



Tampa Bay Water recently completed its regional water demand forecast for the Tampa Bay region. The long-term demand forecast model was developed using historic water use data from our six member governments and the updated forecast is based on 2010 census data, updated predictions of socio-economic factors, including population growth, income and employment, and weather conditions, as well as recent data from the property appraiser's office. The census data show 2.6 million people living in the Hillsborough-Pasco-Pinellas region, 2.3 million of which are served by Tampa Bay Water and its member governments. The updated demand forecast shows that the region's rate of growth remains at approximately 0.86 percent annually, and is not projected to drive the need for additional water supply development over the next 15 years or so.

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EPA cost estimates too low

By [Fred Hiers](#)

Staff writer

Published: Tuesday, March 6, 2012 at 5:10 p.m.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's cost estimate for Florida to follow the federal agency's new nutrient pollution limits was too low, according a study by the National Academy of Sciences.

The academy began the study last year at the request of the EPA amid complaints that the agency's estimate to meet the new standards would cost Floridians between \$135.5 million and \$206.1 million per year. Critics estimated the cost to be about \$12 billion annually.

The polluting nutrients at issue are nitrogen and phosphorus which, in high concentrations, cause algae blooms, kill fish and change the chemical makeup of water bodies.

The academy did not estimate its own cost of meeting the EPA's new rules.

Leonard Shabman, vice chair of the committee that wrote the report, said the EPA's request was for the committee to merely review the EPA's approach in its cost estimates. It was not tasked with deriving its own estimates nor the effectiveness of the standards on Florida's waters.

"But the number is unequivocally not \$200 million. It's higher than that," Shabman told the Star-Banner. "But we don't know how much."

Shabman said although the EPA's estimated costs were often "fairly optimistic" by making assumptions toward the low end of the cost spectrum, EPA critics were "highly pessimistic" and tended to focus on the high end of costs.

He also warned that cost estimates in the billions of dollars were likely due to incorrectly calculating the full cost of addressing Florida's waters instead of the additional costs the EPA's standards would incur.

"It's not like the state was doing nothing. It was already doing a significant amount," Shabman said.

The report also said the cost to some municipal wastewater plants to meet the EPA's goals would see "substantial near-term increases."

Ocala estimated that to make its three wastewater treatment plants meet the EPA's standards would cost between \$90 million and \$150 million.

Meanwhile, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has proposed its own water standards and is asking the EPA to allow the state to implement them instead of the federal rules. The FDEP still awaits an answer.

Florida environmental groups also are fighting the FDEP, saying the FDEP's proposed standards are not stringent enough.

The EPA responded to the Star-Banner regarding the academy findings in writing.

“EPA is already incorporating some of the report’s findings and recommendations for the economic analysis and is considering how it can inform future potential analyses,” the EPA wrote.

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