

Subject: Fwd: DEP RECOGNIZES APRIL AS WATER CONSERVATION MONTH
From: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 01, 2014 3:19 pm
To: "Anderson, Richard" <randerson@regionalwater.org>
Cc: Nancy Smith <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Florida Department of Environmental Protection" <FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com>
Date: April 1, 2014 at 2:59:35 PM EDT
To: disalz@yahoo.com
Subject: DEP RECOGNIZES APRIL AS WATER CONSERVATION MONTH
Reply-To: FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 1, 2014

CONTACT: DEP Press Office, 850.245.2112, DEPNews@dep.state.fl.us

DEP RECOGNIZES APRIL AS WATER CONSERVATION MONTH

~The Department recognizes April as a time for Floridians to implement water conservation strategies~

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection recognizes April as Water Conservation Month. This is a time when residents and visitors are encouraged to learn about ways to save water and help protect one of Florida's most important resources.

"April serves as a time to emphasize how important it is for residents and visitors of Florida to conserve water," said Drew Bartlett, Deputy Secretary of Water Policy and Ecosystem Restoration. "Water restoration is an ongoing priority of the state and this month serves as a time for residents to implement strategies to help the state work towards our goals."

Ongoing statewide efforts show that water conservation strategies are working. Florida remains one of the most water-efficient states in the nation. In 2012, Florida used more than 725 million gallons of reclaimed water every day to conserve freshwater and replenish rivers, streams, lakes and aquifers. Florida used reclaimed water to irrigate 321,340 residences, 548 golf courses, 961 parks and 328 schools according to 2012 data. As a result, Florida is a national leader in water reuse and the only state that collects reuse data annually.

Since most areas of Florida continue to struggle with drought conditions, water conservation is critical. Water conservation is the least costly and easiest plan to preserving our natural resources. Floridians can participate this process by implementing one or more of these 10 simple tips. These tips can help lower monthly water bills while helping to save hundreds of gallons of water.

Indoor Tips:

- Turn off running water while brushing teeth
- Fix household leaks promptly
- Cut time spent in the shower to five minutes
- Soak pots and pans rather than running water while scraping them clean
- Avoid using running water to thaw food

Outdoor tips:

- Water lawn 1-2 times a week
- Water plants early in the morning or in the late evening to reduce evaporation and ineffective watering due to wind
- Use broom to clean driveways, patios and sidewalks
- Plant drought resistant shrubs, trees and plants
- Use a rain barrel to collect water to use for plants and gardens

For facts and information about water conservation throughout April, follow [@FLDEPNews](#) on Twitter. Share your tips for conserving water by using [#DEPConserveWater](#).

About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. The Department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida's air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally-sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. To view the Department's website log on to www.dep.state.fl.us.

<http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLDEP/bulletins/ae1bf9>



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Springs bill passes with most opponents taking the polite role
Bruce Ritchie, 03/31/2014 - 06:34 PM

LobbyTools: The Current

While environmentalists expressed support of a Senate springs bill on Monday, a representative of the **Florida Home Builders Association** stayed in the audience, huddling with representatives of developers and utilities groups.

SB 1576 cleared its second committee stop with no opposing votes. But that doesn't mean that powerful groups at the Capitol are OK with the legislation.

They're just being polite.

"I've made my point in committee," said **Keith Hetrick**, lobbyist and counsel for the Florida Home Builders Association. "I've talked to (Senate) staff. They nod their heads. These same versions keep coming out."

Springs across the state have turned green from algae, fueled by nitrogen in groundwater flowing to springs. Sources of nitrogen can include sewage treatment plant spray fields, septic tanks, livestock farms, fertilizer and dirty stormwater runoff.

SB 1576 would require the setting of minimum flows for springs and require remediation plans that could involve hooking up homes on septic tanks to sewer systems.

The bill also provides an estimated \$365.8 million towards springs projects and sewer hookups. The revenue previously was estimated at \$378 million by Senate staff and likely will be adjusted to match actual appropriations of less than \$100 million now in the House and Senate proposed spending plans.

The bill is drawing public opposition from some property rights advocates and septic tank owners who say it would allow for the creation of responsible management entities to take over operations of septic tanks.

The Florida Home Builders Association opposes the bill because it in effect has a moratorium on new septic systems in "outstanding" springs areas with high nitrogen levels where sewer is not available, Hetrick said.

Representatives of the **Florida Chamber of Commerce** and **Associated Industries of Florida** did get up to speak, saying only that they were working with senators to improve the bill.

Leticia Adams, the chamber's director of infrastructure and governance policy, said after the meeting that springs need immediate funding. She said her group is somewhere between supportive and opposed to the bill but thinks legislation may need to wait another year.

"It needs some more involvement from the agency and from other stakeholders," she said.

On the other hand, environmentalists say the problem has gone on too long.

"The bottom line is this legislation provides a timeline for getting the work done," said **Jake Varn**, a lawyer who is helping write the bill. "It provides the funding. And it identifies the sources of the (nitrogen) problem."

He added, "This is not a one-size-fits-all."

And **Sen. David Simmons**, R-Altamonte Springs and one of five Senate chairmen backing the bill, said the bill doesn't require utilities to take over septic tanks or do any of the things that opponents claim. He said the bill only requires remediation studies of septic tanks.

Sen. Bill Montford, D-Tallahassee and chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, said after the meeting he doesn't think opposition will stop the bill from passing both the House and Senate. He also is one of the five chairmen supporting the push for a springs bill.

"What I hear are a lot of concerns," he said. "And there is nothing with that. I would hope there are concerns because to adequately and rightly address this issue we're going to make a lot of people uncomfortable."

The bill passed his committee by a 5-0 vote and has one more committee stop. A similar House bill, **HB 1313**, has not been heard in its first committee.

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

Subject: Fwd: Springs Protection Awareness Month
From: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 11, 2014 5:02 pm
To: Nancy Smith <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Water News <waternews@sjrwmd.com>
Date: March 11, 2014 at 4:56:55 PM EDT
To: disalz@yahoo.com
Subject: Springs Protection Awareness Month
Reply-To: waternews@sjrwmd.com

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St. Johns River Water Management District

Water News

News, meetings
and notices

March 11, 2014

Springs Protection Awareness Month proclamation adopted

Demonstrating a continuing commitment to long-term springs protection, the St. Johns River Water Management District's Governing Board on March 11 approved a proclamation designating April as Springs Protection Awareness Month. The designation is expected to help increase awareness about the importance of Florida's springs and encourage residents and stakeholders to participate in enhancing the quality and flow of springs.

Sen. Charles Dean has proposed a resolution to the Florida Legislature declaring April as Springs Protection Awareness Month. Water management districts across the state are joining him in recognizing the importance of increasing public awareness about the value of springs.

The District has been working with other agencies for many years through various programs to increase knowledge and understanding about the region's springs, while also working to protect springs systems. The District launched a [Springs Protection Initiative](#) in 2012 that combines science, projects, planning and regulatory programs to reduce nitrate loading and protect spring flows.

Connect with us



Upcoming meetings

For a listing of upcoming meeting dates, times and locations, visit:

- [Governing Board meetings and agendas](#)
- [Other District meetings and notices](#)

Contacts

District staff contacts for:

- [Local governments](#)
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[How to contact your local government](#)

The Initiative brings together science, District regulatory programs, projects and outreach in a focused approach to achieve springs protection. Currently, nine springs protection projects are under way in the Silver Springs, Wekiwa Spring and Volusia Blue Spring systems.

"Nearly \$47 million has been committed this fiscal year to springs cost-share projects within the St. Johns District," said Casey Fitzgerald, director of the Springs Protection Initiative. "By adopting this proclamation, the District Governing Board expresses its commitment to conserve and restore the ecological balance of the springs' systems, which also supports Floridians' quality of life and our regional economy."

The District is actively pursuing additional springs protection projects for a new round of cost-share funding, to which the District has dedicated \$13 million in its preliminary budget for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, 2014. Gov. Scott has recommended \$55 million for springs protection and restoration in his fiscal year 2014-2015 proposed budget.

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

floridaswater.com

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Subject: Permitting bill gets substantial changes in Senate but still faces environmental opposition

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Mar 27, 2014 2:04 pm

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

The Florida Current

Permitting bill gets substantial changes in Senate but still faces environmental opposition
Bruce Ritchie, 03/26/2014 - 04:10 PM

An environmental regulation bill facing environmental opposition was amended on Wednesday to remove several objectionable provisions before passing its first Senate committee.

Also, a bill that would extend the date of a ban on the land application of septic tank waste passed its first committee stop.

SB 1464 is the companion to **HB 703** by Rep. **Jimmy Patronis**, R-Panama City. This is the fourth year in a row he has pushed a wide-ranging bill that would roll back environmental regulations.

Patronis told a meeting of more than 28 lobbyists on Monday that several controversial sections were being removed.

More were taken out Wednesday in amendments offered by members of the **Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation**.

A section that excluded certain drainage districts from regulation by local government was taken out. A representative of the **Ranger Drainage District** had indicated that the language arose from a permitting dispute between the district and Orange County.

Sen. Thad Altman, R-Melbourne, said the issue was controversial and had been vetted in 2013 when **HB 999** by Patronis had similar language stripped from it in the Senate. A Ranger Drainage District representative indicated his opposition.

Sen. Jack Latvala, R-St. Petersburg, offered another amendment that removed Section 1 of the bill which would have prevented counties from enforcing against farms those springs or wetland regulations that were modified or readopted since 2003.

He hinted that the bill may not get voted out of the committee without the amendment. That likely resulted in time running out for the bill in its next three committee stops.

"I'm a little uncomfortable with telling counties they can't adopt wetlands regulations they may have made in the past 10 or 11 years," he said.

Environmental groups continued to voice their objection to the bill. They announced Monday they were asking Patronis and **Sen. Wilton Simpson**, R-Trilby and sponsor of the Senate bill, to drop the legislation.

After the meeting, **Sierra Club Florida** lobbyist **David Cullen** said that the bill was improved but there still were problems with the bill, including Section 5 allowing 30-year water use permits for larger developments in a designated "rural area of critical economic concern."

"There's not much to like in it," Cullen said.

SB 1160, delaying by one year a 2015 ban on the spreading of septic tank waste by one year, was amended and passed despite environmental opposition. The bill, which would have delayed the ban until 2020 before it was amended, also requires a study of alternatives due by Feb. 1, 2015.

Sen. Greg Evers, R-Baker and bill sponsor, said the ban could increase the cost of a septic tank pump-out from \$200 to \$250 to more than \$900 in his Okaloosa County. Septic tank maintenance firms said they would be required to haul the waste to sewage treatment plants that are willing to take it.

SB 830 dealing with carryout shopping bags by **Sen. Dwight Bullard**, D-Cutler Bay, was not heard by the committee. The bill lifts a statewide ban on local bag ordinances in 2010 legislation that required a study. **SB 830** also would provide uniform standards for the adoption of local bag regulations. The bill has three committee stops.

Reporter Bruce Ritchie can be reached at [britchie@thefloridacurrent.com](mailto:britchier@thefloridacurrent.com).

Subject: Florida Current: Bill would delay ban on land spreading of septic tanks waste by two years

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Mar 24, 2014 11:02 am

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

Bill would delay ban on land spreading of septic tanks waste by two years
Bruce Ritchie, 03/18/2014 - 05:38 PM

A House committee approved a bill on Tuesday that delays a prohibition on the land spreading of septic tank waste, which was required in 2010 springs legislation.

About 100,000 septic tanks are pumped out each year resulting in 100 million gallons of septic tank waste, called septage. There are 92 regulated sites which receive the waste including farms that use it as fertilizer, according to the **Florida Department of Health**.

SB 550 in 2010 banned the land application effective beginning on Jan. 1, 2016. This year, **HB 1113** by **Rep. Katie Edwards**, D-Sunrise, as filed would have pushed back the ban by four years.

Her late-filed strike-all amendment on Tuesday would reduce the delay to two years and provide for a study of the options for waste disposal by March 1, 2015.

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The study will identify "the most cost-effective and environmentally-friendly ways to move forward as we both protect our environment and make sure homeowners have a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly means to dispose of septage from their septic tanks," Edwards said.

SB 550 in 2010 was bill touted as a springs protection measure by supporters. It included a statewide inspection requirement for septic tanks and the land application ban beginning in 2016.

The inspection requirement was repealed in 2012 following a backlash by legislators in North Florida and rural homeowners. But the ban on land application of septage remained.

Some owners of businesses that maintain septic tanks said Tuesday that the ban would force them to take the waste to landfills or wastewater treatment plants if the practice is banned. They said the longer travel would raise costs for homeowners who may choose not to maintain their septic tanks.

"We certainly we believe in looking at all the options," said Monitor ["Water Quality"](#) and 100+ policy issues with Legislative IQ or LobbyTools. [Login](#) or [request a demo](#). **Roxanne Groover**, executive director of the **Florida Onsite Wastewater Association**. "We just don't want this one option taken off the table."

Environmental group representatives said they support the study but they do not support delaying the ban.

Rep. Clovis Watson, D-Gainesville, said he opposed the extension. "I would be more amenable to us looking at a report in 2016 and making a decision as to an extension," he said.

Rep. Elizabeth Porter, R-Lake City, said no one can accuse her of not being a protector of springs but she said there was no scientific evidence that the waste is causing pollution in waterways.

"I can't vote against this amendment until someone shows me there is a danger in postponing it," she said.

HB 1113 has two more committee stops. The Senate companion, **SB 1160**, hasn't been heard in the first of its three committee stops.

Subject: Patronis outlines changes to permitting bill as it comes up in Senate this week

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 25, 2014 2:13 pm

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

LobbyTools

Patronis outlines changes to permitting bill as it comes up in Senate this week
Bruce Ritchie, 03/24/2014 - 07:27 PM

Rep. Jimmy Patronis meets with a room full of lobbyists and a three reporters to discuss his environmental permitting bill, HB 703. Photo by Bruce Ritchie.

HB 703, the wide-ranging environmental permitting bill sponsored by Rep. Jimmy Patronis, will be amended in the Senate this week and will differ as the House bill moves forward in the coming weeks, Patronis told lobbyists on Monday.

The Senate companion bill, **SB 1464**, is scheduled to get its first hearing on Wednesday before the **Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation**.

Twenty-eight lobbyists and three reporters crammed into a room with Patronis, with more listening from the hallway, as he went over expected changes in the Senate version of the bill.

Patronis said the House bill would remain unchanged in its next committee stop, which Patronis said will not be held this week.

Mary Jean Yon of Audubon Florida opened comments from the audience by saying that environmental groups now are asking legislators to drop the bills.

"To me the bill, it demonstrates this insatiable appetite to for just continuing to kind of eat away at the regulatory protections that guide Florida at the state and local level," she said.

She added, that after four straight years of such bills from Patronis, "We're just fed up."

Patronis responded that Audubon had been consistent in its opposition to his legislation.

"I appreciate that," he said. "But your consistency also leads to changes in the bill that I'm willing to make today."

"In saying that if you want me to leave the bill as is I will be happy to and not take any of your considerations in place," he said.

Patronis said there will be clarifying language for Section 1, which prohibits counties from enforcing wetlands, springs or stormwater ordinances that have been enacted or modified since July 1, 2003. Local governments and environmentalists strongly oppose that law change.

Representatives of **1000 Friends of Florida** and the **League of Women Voters** said the existing bill language conflicts with **SB 1576**, a comprehensive springs protection bill that passed its first committee stop last week. The House version of the bill, HB 1313, hasn't been heard in a committee.

"I don't know that there will be springs legislation this year," Patronis responded. "I just haven't seen any support."

Among the other changes is language has been dropped that would provide 50-year consumptive permits for landowners who participate in water storage programs, Patronis said.

He said proposal for 30-year permits for developments of regional impact remains in the bill, despite opposition from environmentalists.

A section dealing with prohibiting local governments from rescinding development approval because lands continue to be classified as agriculture for tax purposes also was being dropped, Patronis said.

Gary K. Hunter Jr., an attorney representing the **Association of Florida Community Developers** and agricultural interests, said Patronis is making the effort to listen to concerns and make changes in the legislation.

"If you look at all the sections that remain in the bill, they are not a legislative poke in the eye on any issue," he said. "It is really an advancement of policy issues that is intended to facilitate continued renewed economic growth while being respectful of environmental interests and local governments."

Subject: Reclaimed water bills better for environmentalists

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Mar 24, 2014 8:52 am

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

'Reclaimed' water bills better for environmentalists after a single word is removed
Bruce Ritchie, 03/21/2014 - 02:52 PM

Sometimes one word makes all the difference.

Bills that would require a study on expanding the use of treated wastewater are heading to the House and Senate floors with environmental groups having dropped their concerns — largely because one word was taken out and replaced with a comma.

"I think they (environmental groups) were supportive of the bill, they just had some language they wanted to add to it," **Rep. Lake Ray**, R-Jacksonville and sponsor of **HB 601**, said Friday.

HB 601 on Friday passed the **House State Affairs Committee**, its final committee stop, by a unanimous vote. **SB 536** on Thursday passed the **Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation**, also its final stop.

Florida in 2012 used 725 million gallons per day of treated wastewater — also called "reclaimed water." That's more than is used any other state, according to the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection**, but it's still less than half of Florida's total wastewater flow.

Supporters of the bills say expanding the use of reclaimed water would relieve pressure on groundwater supplies and help avoid the need for pumping water from rivers. But some environmentalists initially suspected the bills represented a water grab by utilities.

Rather than just defining reclaimed water as the reuse of treated wastewater, the bills as filed called for a study of the expansion of the "beneficial use of reclaimed water, including stormwater and excess surface water, in this state."

Audubon Florida and **Sierra Club Florida** representatives said they supported the study and the use of treated wastewater. But they also were concerned that the bill language broadened the definition of reclaimed water to include stormwater and flood waters, which they said are needed to replenish the environment.

Ray told the **House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee** earlier this month that he didn't realize the wording would trigger concerns.

The House and Senate bills were amended this week to take out the word "including" and add a comma — and that relieved most concerns.

The bills now call for a study of on the expansion of "the beneficial use of reclaimed water, stormwater, and excess surface water in this state." That comma separated stormwater and excess surface water from reclaimed water in the study.

The bills were amended further to add language requested by environmental groups, including **Clean Water Action**, to provide for two public hearings.

And the bills now call for studying the efficient use of reclaimed water, resolving concerns about possibly wasting treated wastewater.

"Twenty to 30 percent of our water could be reused," Ray said Friday. "And that means 20 to 30 percent less is coming from our streams and aquifers."

The bills are supported by **Associated Industries of Florida**, the **Florida Chamber of Commerce**, the **Florida League of Cities** and the **Florida Association of Counties**. The study report is due to the governor, House speaker and Senate president by Dec. 1, 2015.

Reporter Bruce Ritchie can be reached at [britchie@thefloridacurrent.com](mailto:britchier@thefloridacurrent.com).

Subject: Fwd: Senate springs proposal still not ready for action
From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 14, 2014 8:58 am
To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>
Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 14, 2014 at 8:56 AM
Subject: Senate springs proposal still not ready for action
To: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>

SENATE SPRINGS PROPOSAL STILL NOT READY FOR ACTION

March 13, 2014

The behind-the-scenes filtering continues on a \$378.8 million measure aimed at restoring and protecting Florida's natural springs. Sen. Charlie Dean, R-Inverness, temporarily postponed the proposal (SB 1576) from making its first appearance of the legislative session Thursday in the Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee. Influential business groups have opposed the measure. "We had hoped today we would have our bill coming out in a more finalized version," said Dean, chairman of the committee. "But as of the last week or 10 days of working in this area, we still feel that there are improvements that need to be made, and we have not tied the last of the issues together." The wide-ranging proposal, which Dean and a group of senators have been working on for months, was introduced Feb. 28. Gov. Rick Scott has requested \$55 million in the 2014-15 state budget for springs protection, up from \$10 million in the current year. Meanwhile, House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, has said water-policy issues may have to wait until the 2015 session, when Rep. Steve Crisafulli, R-Merritt Island, and Sen. Andy Gardiner, R-Orlando, take over the leadership of their respective chambers. Crisafulli and Gardiner have said they want to make water a priority. The springs proposal would require local governments within the state's most-prominent springs zones to enact ordinances on fertilizer use. Also, it would require wastewater treatment plants to reduce the amount of nitrogen released in treated water and agricultural operations to follow "best-management practices." The proposal also would require state and local governments to cover the costs of connecting residential properties to sewer systems where older septic systems are determined to be impacting area waters.

Subject: Draft Springs Bill would Ban New Dairy Farms and Stockyards Around Springs

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Mar 13, 2014 8:41 pm

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

Draft springs bill would ban new dairy farms and stockyards around springs

Bruce Ritchie, 03/13/2014 - 04:03 PM

New stockyards, dairy farms and slaughter operations would be banned from areas around major springs under a new draft version of comprehensive springs legislation.

And **Sierra Club Florida** says the legislation could prohibit local governments from adopting stricter fertilizer ordinances than provided by the state.

Springs across the state have become choked with weeds and algae from high levels of nitrogen in groundwater, according to scientists. Nitrogen sources include farms, fertilizer, dirty stormwater runoff, septic tanks and sewage treatment plants.

SB 1516 by **Sen. Charlie Dean**, R-Inverness, would require septic tanks to be improved or hook up to central sewer in areas with springs with high nitrogen or phosphorus levels. The bill would target actions towards 38 designated "outstanding" springs.

It was scheduled to receive its first vote on Thursday before the **Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation**, which Dean chairs. But he asked for the bill to be temporarily postponed to receive comments on draft new bill language.

"We still feel there are improvements that need to be made and we have not tied the last of the issues together," he said. The bill as filed has support from four other Senate committee chairmen.

The draft language appears to pick up on comments made by **Eric Draper**, executive director of **Audubon Florida**, during a Nov. 20 committee workshop. He suggested that "concentrated animal feeding operations" and slaughterhouses along with the land application of sewage treatment plant waste be listed as prohibited uses in the springs areas.

A 2012 permit request by [Adena Springs Ranch](#) in Marion County to pump 5.3 million gallons per day for 30,000 cattle and a slaughterhouse sparked **opposition from environmentalists**.

Dairy farms along the Suwannee River also have been criticized by environmentalists for contributing slime in springs despite millions of dollars spent by agencies and farmers to prevent manure from seeping into groundwater.

Draper said Thursday the intent was not to target existing operations in any area.

"The senators put that (draft) language in," he said. "It's not our goal to target anyone; it's to curtail within springsheds a practice that's known to discharge pollution into their aquifers."

Sam Ard, director of governmental affairs with the **Florida Cattlemen's Association**, said the bill language raises questions and concerns about whether modifications of existing cattle operations would be affected by the law change.

"We think that any regulatory uncertainty will have a negative effect on existing operations," he said.

Sierra Club Florida lobbyist **David Cullen** said he is concerned that new language in Section 9 of the draft bill would pre-empt local governments from having stronger ordinances than a state model ordinance regulating fertilizer use. Environmentalists and the landscaping industry and its business allies have battled over this issue in the Legislature for at least the past five years.

The draft bill says "the department shall adopt rules to implement this paragraph that establish reasonable minimum standards for local governments to implement and that reflect advancements or improvements regarding nutrient load reductions."

The draft language "retains some good stuff but it has inserted a residential fertilizer preemption," Cullen said.

"We are decidedly not happy about that," he said. An aide to the senator responded the intent of the draft language was not to establish a pre-emption on local fertilizer ordinances.

Subject: Fwd: Ocala Star Banner: getting water right requires getting politics right

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, Mar 09, 2014 7:39 pm

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, Mar 9, 2014 at 7:39 PM

Subject: Ocala Star Banner: getting water right requires getting politics right

To: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>

OTHER VOICES

Getting water right requires getting politics right

By Gary W. Kuhl

Special to the Star-Banner

Published: Sunday, March 9, 2014 at 6:30 a.m.

Last Modified: Friday, March 7, 2014 at 4:39 p.m.

Just when it was starting to feel like the governor and the Florida Legislature might be trying to head in the right direction and "get the water right," things look like they are headed south again.

Gov. Rick Scott recently suggested putting money in the state's budget to assist with Everglades management and improvement in water routing to minimize the disastrous impacts seen this past summer in the Indian River Lagoon — putridly polluted runoff waters released into the lagoon from Lake Okeechobee apparently killed hundreds of dolphins, pelicans and manatees over this past year. Even though Scott's proposed budget amount for the Everglades is a pittance compared to what is needed, it seemed like a positive start.

State monies were recently spent with great fanfare to clean up some of the state's springheads, too, including Silver Springs in Ocala. It is well known that it is going to take serious action upstream of these springheads to stop the nutrient and water consumption problems, but again, these springhead cleanup projects seemed to be a good start.

There seemed to be a few other good signs of recognition by elected state officials of our water problems and, hence, potential problems for Florida's future.

But not so fast. Enter Pam Bondi — Florida's attorney general, who surely receives direction from Gov. Scott — joining some 20 other state attorneys general with formal letters supporting a lawsuit by the American Farm Bureau Federation filed against the feds and the state of Maryland for (gasp!) cleaning up Chesapeake Bay. She, Bondi, claims her only desire here is to stop federal overreach, i.e., to stop a cooperative environmental cleanup program between six states, the District of Columbia and, yes, the federal government.

How does her action make any sense? It's embarrassing. When's the last time you ate an oyster or crab harvested from Chesapeake Bay? That bay is a mess — kind of like Indian River Lagoon.

Then right behind Bondi comes Panhandle Rep. Jimmy Patronis with proposed legislation (HB 703) to eliminate or severely limit Florida counties and municipalities from managing and regulating their own local development and projects impacting our environment. Remember, the Florida Legislature two years ago dismantled Florida's growth management laws and the state department responsible therefore. The reason given was, gosh, the local county and city governments could handle all that stuff. Is there a pattern here?

Is there a decided approach to dismantle the substance of 40 some years of environmental consciousness promulgated by bipartisan Florida governors and legislators? Looks like no one will be overseeing development or long-term planning in Florida,

a state that has now has almost 19 million residents and millions more annual visitors.

Guess who supports this bill, HB 703? Is it the same folks who are suing Maryland because they are trying to clean up their own Chesapeake Bay through planning and, yes, regulation of farming and development practices? Over the long haul, fair and well thought-out regulations are job savers, not job killers.

And finally, along comes Speaker of the House Will Weatherford, who proclaims he is “punting the water stuff” to next year’s legislative session. He acknowledges that Florida’s water issues are real and have been a long time in the making and will take a long time to solve. It is very hard to understand how a responsible leader could make such an ill-considered statement for non-action. It is a problem. It will take a long time to solve it. So, let’s put it off another year?

Kudos to State Sen. Charlie Dean, along with four other Florida senators, who have drafted a proposed bill aimed at protecting and enhancing Florida’s dying springs, and really, our fresh groundwater resources for drinking, irrigation and industry use. Dean cited the proposed bill as long overdue and the “right thing to do” for our state. These five state senators and their proposed bill need our strong support through citizen letters and phone calls to elected officials, such as our governor and other state senators and representatives.

Dean, along with getting his proposed bill passed, will need to fight to quash HB 703. Patronis’ bill opens the door to the old days in Florida — totally unmanaged growth along with an apparent path to privatization of our water resources. Guess who is already strongly lobbying against Dean’s bill? You got it — lobbyists for agricultural and development interests.

Don’t get me wrong, I like agriculture, chambers of commerce and homebuilder folks — many of us have relatives and good friends in these groups. I like Rep. Patronis; several of us met with him this past summer to express our concerns about his bill that passed last year, further weakening water management districts in Florida. I like jobs being created here in Florida and good pay for employees.

However, if we mess up what brings people and businesses to our beautiful and unique state, we can kiss it all goodbye. Selling or polluting our natural resources to the highest bidder to get re-elected as governor or attorney general or legislator is dead wrong.

Maybe many have never seen a Florida spring in the wild, and maybe some could care less about “the environment,” but we taxpayers will pay the bill to try to fix the mess if our water is not properly managed

Help Sen. Dean get his bill passed and kill HB 703.

Gary W. Kuhl is a former Citrus County administrator and former executive director of the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Subject: Fwd: challenge to federal judge's ruling on NNC
From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 07, 2014 9:34 am
To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>
Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 7, 2014 at 9:34 AM
Subject: challenge to federal judge's ruling on NNC
To: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>

Environmental groups to challenge federal judge's ruling allowing state water quality rules
Bruce Ritchie, 03/06/2014 - 05:22 PM

Environmental groups on Thursday filed a notice in federal court that they are appealing a federal judge's order in January siding with Florida and the U.S. **Environmental Protection Agency** on their agreement in 2013 allowing the state to set pollution standards in waterways.

The appeal may prevent the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** from moving forward with state rules approved by the federal court and the federal EPA, DEP spokesman **Patrick Gillespie** said.

The Legislature in 2013 passed **SB 1808** ratifying an agreement between DEP and the federal EPA calling for the state to move forward in implementing rules once federal water quality standards were withdrawn.

The appeal on Thursday was filed in the **11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals** in Atlanta on behalf of the **Florida Wildlife Federation**, the **Conservancy of Southwest Florida**, the **Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida**, **St. John's Riverkeeper** and the **Sierra Club**.

Earthjustice attorney **David Guest** said the groups are challenging Florida's "polluter-friendly" rules.

"The (federal) **Clean Water Act** is supposed to mean clean water," Guest said. "That's not happening here in Florida, and that's why we're going to court."

"The evidence is all around us – dead manatees, dead dolphins, polluted drinking water and green slime breaking out on our springs, rivers, lakes and bays," he said.

DEP Secretary Herschel T. Vinyard Jr. said Thursday that he was "deeply disappointed" by the appeal, which he said likely will prevent the department from implementing the most comprehensive water quality standards in the nation.

"The department, along with Floridians, are very concerned about excess nutrients that are causing algal blooms found in many of our springs, lakes and estuaries," he said. "I am confident that the appeals court will side with previous federal and state court recommendations and the state, federal and local scientists who have made it their life's work to improve Florida's water quality and quantity."

On Thursday Guest told *The Florida Current* that the appeal does not prevent the state or federal EPA from taking action.

On Jan. 7, **U.S. District Judge Robert Hinkle** said setting pollution limits for streams in Florida "had proven elusive" but DEP and the federal EPA now agree that a new approach meets the requirement of the federal **Clean Water Act**.

He said a 2009 consent decree requiring EPA to set those numeric nutrient criteria did not affect the rights of industry groups to challenge the outcome. And he said the requested change does not affect the same rights of environmental groups.

"Now, as then, the **Clean Water Act** depends in part on honest administrative enforcement of duly adopted standards," Hinkle wrote. "At least as shown by this record, **FDEP's** new standards have been duly adopted."

Subject: Citrus County Chronicle: it's time to stop kicking the water bottle

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Mar 06, 2014 9:27 am

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

It's time to stop kicking the water bottle

THE ISSUE: Water advocates may have to put hopes on hold.

OUR OPINION: Our senator thinks not, and we hope not.

Will Weatherford may have a House, but Charlie Dean says he's got two-thirds of a movement.

Rep. Weatherford, the speaker of Florida's lower chamber, told the News Service of Florida in February that while he's aware of the push in the state Senate to reform water policy, "when it comes to water ... the long-term, 20-year plans will likely come in the next session."

Instead, Weatherford said, the House would focus its energies on a concurrent Senate effort backed by Stuart Sen. Joe Negron — chair of the Senate's appropriations committee — seeking to clean up Lake Okeechobee and damage caused downstream by discharges from the swelled landmark.

That's not soon enough for Sen. Dean and a group of senators who have filed broad springs legislation, or for environmental advocates who say Florida's waters are only sessions from spoliation.

Dean, speaking to the Chronicle editorial board last week, said he began meeting last year with four fellow senators — David Simmons, Wilton Simpson, Bill Montford and Alan Hays — to discuss a long-term plan "for the future of water," to be inclusive enough to satisfy the demands of stakeholders ranging from environmentalists to business interests and tourists. Over the course of the intervening year, he said, a plethora of policymakers and officials were brought into the conversation and allies were made not just in the governor's office, but in his chair.

On Feb. 28, Dean and Montford introduced the fruit of that yearlong effort to reshape water policy and protect Florida's springs, SB 1576.

The bill takes some of the bold steps environmentalists have called for the Legislature to take for years, but have watched it balk at, including identification and removal or repair of leaking septic systems — funded mostly or entirely by the state — and establishment and enforcement of quality-based minimum flows and levels for springs.

Most importantly, though, it would do something at a time when legislative leaders think there's still time to do nothing.

Dean doesn't think Weatherford's opposition to water policy reform will have much effect on his bills, because "if you take the governor and the five other senators, that's two-thirds of a movement."

We hope two-thirds is enough.

Subject: Ocala Star Banner: Water Issue Looming...

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 04, 2014 12:04 pm

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

Water issue looming as legislative session starts Tuesday

By [Fred Hiers](#)

Staff writer

Published: Monday, March 3, 2014 at 3:30 p.m.

Environmentalists and Florida lawmakers who want tougher policies to protect the state's springs, rivers and groundwater remain hopeful for progress this legislative session, despite some warnings that this may not be their year.

Some Florida state senators are crafting a comprehensive package expected to address water quality problems with many Florida lakes, springs and the aquifer. The legislation will include tougher regulation of wastewater treatment plants and farm fertilizer application, provide for the replacement of thousands of leaking septic tanks, and devote as much as \$400 million per year in real estate taxes to clean up water.

Sen. Charlie Dean, R-Inverness, whose district includes part of Marion County, is among a handful of lawmakers crafting the springs protection legislation.

The holdup, if there is one, might come from the House. Speaker Will Weatherford recently told The News Service of Florida that while he is "sensitive" to water legislation being formulated, the issue is too widespread for handling during one legislative session; instead, he will focus on issues "we can control."

"I think we'll tackle a lot of the funding issues this year," said Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel. "I think there is an opportunity for us to address some of the policy issues, but water is so broad, you have water quality, you have water quantity, water infrastructure and how we move water resources."

Weatherford has deferred water policy issues to Rep. Steve Crisafulli, R-Merritt Island, who is slated to be speaker in 2015.

Senate President Don Gaetz told the Tampa Tribune that his scheduled successor, Andy Gardiner, R-Orlando, as well as Crisafulli, have already "staked out" environmental issues, and he doesn't want to infringe on that arrangement.

Despite those rumblings, Dean predicts some measure of new water policy legislation will succeed this year.

"It just wouldn't make sense to keep ignoring what we brought to the forefront and everyone has been asking for," Dean said.

He added: "I have been in the Legislature a long time, and one thing you have is compromise available to you. I think we can come together (on springs protection). I would be the most disappointed person if we walk away from this with nothing. I just know there's a way to get this done."

Sen. Wilton Simpson, R-Trilby, one of the architects of the Senate's springs protection proposal, said he wasn't troubled by Weatherford's stance, according to the News Service of Florida.

"I think we've got an ambitious agenda in the Senate, but I think we are on the right track," Simpson said. "It will take a few years to fully ramp up and be able to spend a \$150, \$200, \$300 million a year. But at least with the path known, our agencies — DEP, the water basin boards — can start planning for these projects."

Ryan Smart, with the Florida Conservation Coalition, said there is still time for the House to craft something. To do nothing in the House, he said, would be wrong.

"We're in a crisis mode right now. I don't think the springs can wait until next year," Smart said.

The alternative is for the Legislature to keep funding individual projects, he said, but that would not be as beneficial without a larger policy change.

"You're just cleaning up the damage that you've already done," he said.

But that approach appears to be what Crisafulli has in mind. He told the Associated Press that "most of what we're looking at right now is project-related, not policy-related."

One example: determining ways to reduce the amount of water released from Lake Okechobee into sensitive ecosystems west

One example: determining ways to reduce the amount of water released from Lake Okeechobee into sensitive ecosystems west and east of the lake.

Another: a cleanup of the Indian River Lagoon, which suffers from high nutrient levels, failing area septic tanks and invasive vegetation.

He also wants to focus on finding ways to store more water north of Lake Okeechobee, which would alleviate pressure on the lake's aging dike and reduce the amount of water released into sensitive ecosystems.

Last year, water levels in the 730-acre lake rose to dangerous levels during a series of heavy rains. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released large amounts of water, and its contaminants, into the Indian River Lagoon, which some environmentalists say detrimentally affected the area's delicate ecosystems.

Smart said the proposals are good, but a piecemeal approach could end up distracting from the need for broader water policy.

Other than the springs protection legislation and plans for Indian River and Lake Okeechobee, Smart does not see much other significant environmental legislation on the near political horizon.

Eustis Whitfield is a senior environmental adviser with the Dawson & Associates law firm in Washington and was environmental adviser to four Florida governors. Whitfield also thinks the Indian River and Lake Okeechobee proposals are good but need to be part of a larger environmental policy.

"Florida is a very big state. To concentrate only on one part of it is not broad-minded enough," Whitfield said.

Whitfield said he hopes public pressure will be enough to force the House to move toward more sweeping legislation.

"When the people speak loud enough ... and often enough the political system listens. That's the hope we have," Whitfield said.

Whitfield said Weatherford's announcement to push off any springs protection legislation until next year is bad news.

"That was one of the last things we wanted to hear," Whitfield said. "But we can't go home and say, 'Oh well, we'll see you next year.'"

Meanwhile, there are a few subplots that could influence how lawmakers shape water legislation this year. Some examples:

Voters will decide in a November referendum whether to invest some existing taxes paid on real estate transactions into water and springs programs.

Some suggest the money could be used to fund the proposed springs protection legislation. Others think the two issues should be separate.

Lawmakers backing springs protection legislation are trying to broaden their support base by limiting the financial burden on municipalities. The changes would mean local governments would not be required to implement the legislation unless there is state money to pay for it.

Gov. Rick Scott has proposed \$55 million for the springs in the coming year, a \$45 million increase from last year. It is likely that Silver Springs would benefit from that money.

But, again, Whitfield and others fear that such piece-by-piece funding encourages the selection of individual water projects rather than a comprehensive and broad approach to fixing Florida's water problems.

Plan for springs protection uncertain, but big first step

March 2, 2014

Written by: [Jennifer Portman](#), Democrat senior writer

It's still only in draft form, but a bipartisan effort by five state senators to craft Florida's first comprehensive springs protection bill already has emerged as one of the most closely watched measures for the upcoming session.

Hailed by environmentalists as long overdue and condemned by industry and local government groups for adding needless and burdensome regulations, the draft plan would establish firm timelines for action and provide nearly \$380 million a year for projects to restore and protect Florida's biggest springs.

"The time has come for us to say that our springs must be protected, not only for ourselves, but for our children and our children's children," primary drafter Sen. David Simmons, R-Altamonte Springs, said at a recent two-hour workshop on the bill. "Something has to be done and done now."

The proposal calls for state regulators to establish protection and management zones around Florida's 33 first-magnitude springs and five others, develop basin management action plans for those watersheds and set minimum-flow levels for protected springs. All waste water systems in the zones would be required to adhere to strict limits on the amount of spring-polluting nitrates that could be discharged into the basin. In addition to residential fertilizer ordinances and the adoption of agricultural best management practices, homes on lots within those zones with more than one bedroom per acre also would be required to hook up to central sewer systems if available, or install advanced septic systems — all at no cost to the homeowner.

Funding for wastewater and other needed improvements would come by tapping 20 percent of documentary stamp tax fees collected by the state. The Acquisition and Restoration Council, which currently ranks projects eligible for funding under the Florida

Draft Springs Legislation

Sponsors have until noon Tuesday to file a bill to be considered by the Legislature this session, and may go right up to the deadline. The most recently released draft would create spring protection zones for 38 of Florida's primary springs, along with restoration and minimum flow requirements, as well as other protections aimed at healing the state's ailing freshwater springs.

Players to watch

State Sen. David Simmons, R-Altamonte Springs, chair of the Senate's banking and insurance committee, has taken the lead in drafting the proposed spring bill. Other key senate supporters and committee chairmen are: Sen. Bill Montford, D-Tallahassee; Sen. Charlie Dean, R-Inverness; Sen. Wilton Simpson, R-Tribly; and Sen. Alan Hays, R-Umatilla.

Forecast

Top leaders in the Senate and House say comprehensive water policy bills, such as the one being drafted to address springs, likely won't be passed this year. Next session's legislative leaders have both said water will be a top priority issue. Watch for money to be allocated for individual springs restoration projects. Gov. Scott has recommended \$55 million be dedicated to help fund such projects.

Forever land buying program, would evaluate and recommend which springs-related projects should be funded. Money would be allotted to “the worst first,” sponsors said.

“We know we don’t have enough funding to do everything,” Simmons said. “This is a major step, but it is only the first step.”

The effort comes as an improved state financial picture and accompanying real estate rebound has made available more money for such programs. At the same time, environmental calamities statewide fueled the success of a constitutional ballot initiative that if approved by voters in November would earmark up to \$10 billion in state doc stamp revenue over 20 years for conservation land purchases.

Simmons and the other members of what Senate President Don Gaetz calls the “Gang of Five” — including Sen. Bill Montford, D-Tallahassee, and Sen. Charlie Dean, R-Inverness, and two other Republican committee chairmen — have repeatedly said the springs draft legislation is not perfect, calling it “a work in progress.” The lawmakers have solicited input from environmental and industry groups in an effort to fashion a palatable bill, but have stressed inaction is not an option.

“We want to identify what is doable,” Dean said at the workshop. “I’d rather be guilty of doing something than doing nothing.”

In an apparent effort to appease local government interests, Simmons last week said he’s penned a new draft of the bill he called “Plan B,” which has not yet been made public, that eliminates a controversial provision requiring municipalities to meet the new wastewater standards even if state funding was not available. Simmons said in the new version, local governments denied funding for projects needed to meet the new requirements would not be held to the tougher standards. Cost-sharing plans would be emphasized, he said.

“I believe you are going to find every local government wholeheartedly supporting this legislation,” he said. “Rather than using the stick and the carrot, we are going to use the carrot alone.”

News of the new draft was greeted by some opponents last week with cautious optimism.

“It sounds very much that Plan B is something we are looking forward to working with you on,” said Ryan Matthews with the Florida League of Cities.

Concerns about the proposal, however, go beyond unfunded mandates. A letter sent last month to the senators and signed by 22 industry and government groups, including the Associated Industries of Florida, the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the Florida Farm Bureau, outlined a host of problems with the draft. They contend Florida’s existing regulatory rules and tools — if fully funded and properly implemented — are adequate to address the springs’ water quality and quantity problems.

But Simmons and other supporters of the plan disagree. They point out that laws authorizing the state's regulatory agencies to act have been on the books for decades and things haven't been done. The proposal, they say, provides two missing ingredients: a measurable time frame for meeting standards and goals and a dedicated funding source.

"There are things that have been sitting around for 30 years that people just keep talking about," Simmons said. "What's the problem with setting forward definable time frames to get the job done? Nothing."

Bob Knight, director of Florida Springs Institute, said the condition of Florida's springs already is dire. His recent research shows 20 percent of the state's groundwater has a nitrate level above what is considered tolerable for springs. Spring flow has decreased by 30 percent. Signature springs around the state are in sharp decline.

"We've gone way past the point of harm on these springs," he told the senators at last week's workshop. "They have been getting bad for 30 years. Fifteen years ago the Florida Springs Initiative and DEP wrote a report that told exactly how to fix those problems and that report was never finalized or followed through on because these are difficult issues."

Knight called the proposal now being considered a "bold effort," and called on lawmakers to not water it down.

"Drastic measures need to be taken," Knight told the *Democrat*. "This (draft proposal) is amazing in terms of its current scope, but as it gets watered down it's one more sign of retreat. I hope it won't be."

Presuming an actual bill is filed — the deadline is by noon on Tuesday — the likelihood of its final passage is in doubt. While the support of the Senate quintet improves its chance of proceeding in that chamber, there currently is no companion bill in the House and legislative leaders have indicated the measure won't get final approval this year.

"I think we'll tee up some policy, but I think the really big, meaty, holistic policy initiatives when it comes to water and reform and water quality issues and the long-term, 20-year plans and initiatives will probably come in the next session," House Speaker Will Weatherford told reporters.

Speaker-designate Steve Crisafulli, R-Merritt Island, and incoming Senate President Andy Gardiner, R-Orlando, have both said water issues will be among their top priorities when they assume the top leadership positions next year.

"Those two guys are going to spend a lot of time and effort on this. And it's such a complex issue that it really is deserving of time and serious thought before you try to change policy," Weatherford added. "What you don't want to do is throw a bunch of money at a water program or a plan that hasn't been proven to make a difference."

Gaetz said he couldn't comment on a bill still being drafted, but that the senators and their House counterparts should have the opportunity to make a reasoned proposal.

"It isn't just about the money, it's about the competing interests," he said. "This may take two or three or four or five sessions to do well and do right."

Proponents of the measure, however, say the time to act is now.

"There is going to be a lot of activity this session. I hope that we make it clear, we can't wait another year," said Rob Williams, counsel for the Center for Earth Jurisprudence.

"The springs are like the Everglades for North Florida. If the Senate comes back with a good bill, maybe the Speaker will change his mind."

Charles Pattison, president of 1000 Friends of Florida, said he expects to see money to be allocated for individual springs projects. Gov. Rick Scott has recommended \$55 million be spent this year for springs restoration — but is not getting his hopes up for big water policy changes this year.

Still, he's encouraged by the senators' effort for springs.

"That's the first I've ever seen anything like that happen," Pattison said. "Maybe it's too much to expect a major bill like Simmons' bill, but you have to start somewhere."

Subject: Plan would seek to better protect springs
From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Mar 01, 2014 7:50 am
To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>
Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

PLAN WOULD SEEK TO BETTER PROTECT SPRINGS

February 28, 2014

After weeks of work with other lawmakers, Sen. Charlie Dean, R-Inverness, filed a wide-ranging proposal Friday that could lead to increased protections for Florida's natural springs. The 38-page proposal (SB 1576) calls, in part, for designating "Outstanding Florida" springs, including what are known as "historic first magnitude" springs. The Department of Environmental Protection would be required by July 1, 2015, to map out spring-protection and management zones for those specially designated springs. Also, water-management districts would have to establish minimum flows and minimum water levels for those springs. Dean has been part of a group of senators who have focused on springs protection recently. "Springs are a unique part of this state's scenic beauty, deserving the highest level of protection under ... the state Constitution," the bill says. "Springs provide critical habitat for plants and animals, including many endangered or threatened species. They provide immeasurable natural, recreational, economic and inherent value."

Feb 25, 4:00 PM EST

Fla. lawmakers to talk water funding, not policy

By JENNIFER KAY Associated Press

OKEECHOBEE, Fla. (AP) -- In the marshes along the western edge of Florida's largest freshwater lake, the water is clear, wading birds burst into the sky ahead of an approaching airboat, and there's no sign of the turmoil that elevated water levels caused last summer.

The political waters in Tallahassee, though, are roiling over Lake Okeechobee and other hydrological woes, from Florida's Big Bend to the state's signature springs to a treasured estuary along the Atlantic.

Residents, lawmakers and environmental advocates want the state to do more to better manage its water resources. However, the speaker of the House has said no major change to Florida's water policies is likely to come out of the legislative session that begins March 4.

Rep. Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, told reporters earlier this month that any water issues that come up this year will deal with funding, while policy initiatives and long-term water management plans likely will be deferred until next year. His office declined comment last week on those statements and referred questions about water issues to the legislator expected to take over as speaker in 2015, House Majority Leader Steve Crisafulli, R-Merritt Island.

"Most of what we're looking at right now is project-related, not policy-related," Crisafulli said.

The projects up for discussion include a cleanup in the Indian River Lagoon and finding ways to store more water north of Lake Okeechobee, which would alleviate pressure on the lake's decrepit dike and reduce the amount of water released into sensitive ecosystems west and east of the lake, Crisafulli said.

Last year, water levels in the lake rose to dangerous levels during a very rainy wet season, prompting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which controls the dike and locks around the 730-square-mile lake, to release large amounts of fresh water into the Indian River Lagoon and the Caloosahatchee River. The excess water and the pollution it carried were blamed for steep declines in the health of those ecosystems.

Residents on either side of the lake loudly called for the water to stop; corps officials said they were working to do so while managing the risks that high water levels pose to the earthen dike, parts of which date back to the 1930s. It got so contentious that Republican Gov. Rick Scott added the lake's federal management to his list of complaints against President Barack Obama's administration.

State senators investigating the problems have recommended shifting control of how and when water is released from the lake from the corps to the state, which would require congressional action. The Senate select committee led by Sen. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, also recommends \$220 million in state funding to improve water quality and expand storage reservoirs around the lake.

In November, voters will consider a conservation amendment that could set aside \$10 billion in state funds over 20 years for land and water conservation. Some lawmakers, Republican and Democrat, say it's better to wait and see whether that amendment passes before devoting major resources to water cleanup and management.

Waiting doesn't sit well with everyone, though.

"What we know is that during this legislative session or any other legislative session, if we do not make the elected officials do what we demand, then they won't," said Cris Costello, a regional organizer for the Sierra Club, which has signed onto a statewide campaign that aims to build public demand for better water quality and resource management. "They will take the easy way out and remain in status quo mode."

It's unclear how the House would receive bipartisan legislation that would set a firm timeframe for cleaning up Florida's most polluted springs, identify the septic tanks and other sources of that pollution and establish an ongoing funding source for those projects. Sen. Wilton Simpson, R-Trilby, is one of five lawmakers now working on the bill in the Senate.

Scott wants to spend \$55 million in the coming year to restore and protect Florida's long-suffering springs. "I think we're looking for more money than that this year to get started," Simpson said.

Scott also has pledged \$130 million in the upcoming budget for Everglades projects, including restoration of the Kissimmee River that drains into South Florida's wetlands, construction of a storm-water treatment plant for Martin and St. Lucie counties and reconstruction of the Tamiami Trail to allow water to freely flow south.

Environmental groups have criticized state officials for slashing funding for conservation purchases as well as Florida's invocation of states' rights in joining a friend-of-the-court brief challenging a cleanup plan for the Chesapeake Bay. Also missing from this year's water proposals, they say, is any discussion of stopping water pollution at its source: farms, septic tanks and wastewater treatment plants.

"Do we need money for cleanup and restoration? Yes, but in order for those projects to work you have to stop the source of the pollution," Costello said. She called Scott's budget proposals "a political ploy in an election season to make it look like he's doing something."

Audubon Florida officials point to Lake Okeechobee as an example of what happens when pollution isn't addressed at the source. It's the focus of competing interests: Environmentalists want to preserve its resources; the corps uses it for flood control; the

state wants it for South Florida's water supply; and the agriculture industry views it as a reservoir. Repeated costly cleanups have been needed in and around the lake because water hasn't been stored or cleaned elsewhere. Meanwhile, pollution continues to flow into the watersheds in quantities that exceed standards the state set for the lake.

"With all the repeated high-water and low-water problems on the lake, and the estuary dumps, and all the pollution, and all the water shortages - you know, we're going to have to spend a lot of money to fix it. If we don't, this is going to be our life, and it's going to get nothing but worse with more and more people (moving to Florida)," said Paul Gray, science coordinator for Audubon Florida's Lake Okeechobee program. "If this isn't important to people - this is going to be our life, really? It's going to be this bad?"

Follow Jennifer Kay on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/jnkay> .

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GAETZ: 2013 SPRINGS FUNDING WAS A START

Florida's deteriorating natural springs will see a boost in funding from the state, but probably not close to the \$378.8 million outlined in an ambitious Senate restoration plan, Senate President Don Gaetz said Friday.

Last week, House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, also said he doesn't expect any major statewide policy changes regarding the springs until next year, when two new leaders take over the chambers. "You've got the speaker-designate Steve Crisafulli and president-designate Andy Gardiner who have both said water issues and springs issues will be a hallmark of their time as presiding officers," Gaetz, R-Niceville, said. "I don't think Will Weatherford or I should say, after we just heard our successors give compelling speeches about what they want to do, 'Let's, quick, park on their dime.' I think that's inappropriate."

Gov. Rick Scott has proposed \$55 million for the upcoming year. Gaetz called the \$10 million the Legislature approved for springs in 2013, up from zero funding the year before, "a start."

This year, a bipartisan group of senators are advancing a plan to require local governments within the state's most-prominent springs zones to enact ordinances on fertilizer use, make wastewater treatment plants reduce the amount of nitrogen released in treated water and require agricultural operations to follow "best-management practices." The proposal also would require state and local governments to cover the cost of connecting residential properties to sewer systems where older septic systems are impacting area waters.

Source: News Service of Florida

IN OUR OPINION

Editorial: A horrible bill

Published: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 at 6:30 a.m.

Back in 2011, when Gov. Rick Scott and his Republican legislative colleagues recklessly decided Florida's growth planning and permitting process needed streamlining, one of their core arguments was that city and county governments had matured enough to handle the tedious and technical work involved. So when the Community Development Act gutted a quarter-century of state-driven growth management process and progress, it not only affirmed but elevated the importance of home rule on growth matters.

Now comes state Rep. Jimmy Patronis, R-Panama City, with arguably the worst bill of the 2014 legislative session. Patronis' bill, HB 703, would effectively strip local governments of much of the growth management powers bequeathed to them in 2011 with the dismantling of the Department of Community Affairs, which once held sway over most big growth-related decisions in the state.

HB 703 is not only an affront to home rule and community-based growth management but is an assault on water supply protection and local growth decision making but, arguably, would allow some large landholders to privatize big chunks of Florida's water supply.

The list of offensive parts of HB 703 is long and inexplicable, but here are some of the key components that should have every Floridian riled up:

- It retroactively prohibits the enforcement of any local ordinances regarding springs, wetlands and stormwater approved after July 2003.
- It bans local government boards from requiring a super-majority vote, rather than a simple majority, to amend comprehensive plans and land-use actions.
- Would make it illegal for local governments from rescinding comp plan amendments that permit more intensive development of agricultural lands, whether or not the landowner has met the conditions required for the change.
- Would allow Developments of Regional Impact to receive a 30-year consumptive use water permit, which now are only granted to governments and public utilities.
- Agriculture — which uses 40 percent of our groundwater and is the largest consumer of water in the state — would be exempt from taking part in the water supply planning process.

-- Large landowners who participate in water storage programs could receive 50-year water use permits and would be allowed to sell that water to governments and utilities, clearly the first step toward privatizing what is clearly a public resource.

Of course, Big Ag, Big Sugar and Big Business are enthusiastically backing Petronis' bill. Meanwhile, groups like the Florida Conservation Coalition, the Sierra Club and Florida Audubon are aggressively opposing it.

The Martin County Conservation Alliance maybe summed this bill up best: It's "anti-river, anti-home rule and anti-planning."

It probably speaks volumes that with a week to go before the Legislature convenes, there is no Senate companion to HB 703. But that does not mean it cannot become law. If the House passes it — and, sadly, this seems right up that chamber's alley — it could be snuck into another, larger bill that is sure to pass.

Please contact our legislators and ask them to oppose HB 703. It is a bad bill that would be bad for Florida's water, growth management and, indeed, its future.

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Subject: Fwd: The Tampa Tribune: Finding New Water for FL
From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2014 10:57 am
To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>
Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2014 at 10:57 AM
Subject: The Tampa Tribune: Finding New Water for FL
To: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>

Finding 'new' water for Florida

BY MARK FARRELL

Special to The Tampa Tribune

Published: February 21, 2014

With Senate Bill 536, the Florida Legislature is starting a process to quantify and recognize the important role of recycling our water supply in the overall management of our water resources.

Audubon has some concerns about this study including excess surface water and stormwater, but the fact is that we need to know how much water we have, how much we can expect and what sources it comes from.

Florida leads the nation in the amount of reclaimed water produced, but we could do so much more. As much as we are using we are also sending too much usable water to tide. In other words, we are throwing it away.

Today our reclaimed water is used primarily for irrigation, both agriculture and landscaping. We also have a few rehydration projects, where reclaimed water is used to rehydrate wetlands or other natural bodies.

This proposed study, due in December 2015, will help us understand how much reclaimed water we have, how it can be used and what needs to be done to help educate the public that treated right, water is just water. The water management districts have done much to encourage water recycling, but more can be done to increase the efficient use of this precious resource.

And they are sources of water that will help us ensure that we do not overuse our traditional ground or surface water. Because, however we decide to use those resources — including recycling our reclaimed water into drinking water — we still have to be mindful of the need to protect natural systems and public health. All of these sources are limited and all need to be used wisely. Although we have not come to the end of our resources, we can look to California to see the many ways that reclaimed water — they call it "purified" — has been applied to create desperately needed drinking water supplies.

California has been recycling its water supply for years and gained widespread acceptance. Even with this efficient use of water, they are still subject to the hardships of periodic drought, as is Florida.

In order to decide what we want to do, we need to know what we have. This study will help define our reclaimed resource. It will not tell us how to use it.

Mark Farrell, PE, is a former assistant executive director of the Southwest Florida Water Management District and principal at WRA Engineering. He is the president of WaterReuseFL.

Subject: Fwd: The Tampa Tribune: Let's begin to solve FL's water challenges
Date: Monday, February 24, 2014 10:53:07 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Diane Salz
To: WRWSA
CC:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Diane Salz** <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2014 at 10:52 AM
Subject: The Tampa Tribune: Let's begin to solve FL's water challenges
To: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>

Let's begin to solve Florida's water challenges

Published: February 22, 2014

With Florida projected to become the third most-populous state, the need for future water supplies has been receiving a lot of media attention lately. The discussions have ranged from lawsuits filed against neighboring states for limiting the flow of water down the Apalachicola River, to finding critical funding to address the water quantity and quality needs for America's Everglades. Additionally, another hot water topic making the news is developing long-term solutions to halt the more than 4 billion gallons of polluted water flushed daily from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries.

Although our state's leaders are stepping up and have brought these issues to the forefront, we must continue to make water policy a top priority in Florida and not wait for another environmental catastrophe before we take action.

This past session, funding for important environmental initiatives improved, and those of us in the environmental community remain optimistic that these commitments to the environment will continue. However, Florida has been lacking in its comprehensive water policy for years.

I do not think it has been out of malice or negligence, but simply because solving Florida's water problem is complex and has not been an exciting front-page issue that gets everyone's attention. Now that is changing. With the Lake Okeechobee crisis at the forefront, people are starting to fear that clean drinking water, swimming in our springs and at our beaches, or that commercial and recreational fisheries may be threatened. Those are real consequences of not taking all the necessary steps to protect our water supply and finding long-term solutions to the harmful discharges plaguing our state's river systems and threatening our economy.

There isn't a silver bullet to the water quantity and quality problems facing the state. It took decades to get to where we are now, and it will take many years to recover. We must be aggressive in our actions and provide the necessary resources to truly make a difference to ensure we don't have continued water crises in Florida.

We can accomplish this goal by focusing on solutions both short-term and long-term that will benefit the people and wildlife of Florida. Solutions such as wetland restoration on agricultural lands by using the USDA's federal Wetland Reserve Program, dispersed water management/storage, completion of the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation, water conservation and water farming will go a long way toward addressing the crisis in South Florida. Similar programs, in addition to smart growth and regional water supply planning, will significantly improve the water crisis in Central and North Florida.

Some of the solutions are tried and true, others are innovative and new, like the dispersed water management program that recognizes that water can be stored on private or public land and the land, leased from private landowners, can assist in water farming and storage.

The state's water management districts must have the funding and the willingness to move forward with creative solutions, while we are in a period of above-average rainfall. It takes time to implement these solutions, so taking appropriate actions now will protect Florida's water supply, our economy and our environment.

Let's stay out of crisis mode for water policy and our future.

Shelly Lakly, Ph. D, is the Florida state director of The Nature Conservancy.

Subject: The Future of FL's Springs...

Date: Saturday, February 22, 2014 1:02:16 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Diane Salz

To: WRWSA

CC:

Gainesville Sun

A former governor, a scientist and an attorney who represents big water users managed to agree on a few things about protection of Florida springs at an environmental law conference Friday — for one, they agreed that water will be a much more valuable commodity in the future.

Overall, the future of Florida water as presented by former Gov. Kenneth H. “Buddy” MacKay, Robert Knight of the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute and attorney Wayne Flowers is full of competing interests, water grabs and bleak choices.

“Our ability to deal with this issue would mark a turning point in Florida politics,” said MacKay. “Everybody sees the end in sight. There is a big run on consumptive-use permits. People are trying to get a vested right (to water). I think it’s an outrage.”

The discussion was titled “Thirsty Agriculture, Thirsty Springs: Who Gets to Drink from the CUP?” and was part of the 20th annual Public Interest Environmental Conference at the University of Florida College of Law Friday.

It comes as increasing public pressure is being put on lawmakers to protect Florida’s springs and the groundwater aquifer that supplies them from the problems of less water and greater pollution.

Several bills have been introduced in the Legislature, and they are already drawing criticism from Associated Industries of Florida, the Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical Association and the Florida Chamber of Commerce.

While Friday’s discussion intended to focus on agriculture as a major user of water, it broadened to other users including municipal utilities that are seeking consumptive-use permits of 20 or more years to draw large amounts of water from the aquifer to keep growing.

Historically, Florida springs pumped out 10 to 11 billion gallons of water a day. That is down to about 7 billion gallons a day now, Knight said. A primary reason for the drop is increased pumping of the aquifer.

“During that period rainfall is variable but essentially steady ... but spring flows are down 32 percent on average,” Knight said. “The springs are harmed. The question is, what can we do about it, and what is the role of (consumptive-use permits)?”

Flowers, an attorney with the Jacksonville firm of Lewis, Longman & Walker, represents utilities, farmers and other major water users.

The percentage of overall water use by agriculture has remained stable or declined since 1975. Water use by farmers produces cheap food, Flowers said, adding that agriculture is second only to tourism as a driver of Florida’s economy.

Flowers said a primary issue is competing water users — public utilities vs. agriculture and utilities against each other for larger allocations of water for future growth.

Tough choices will have to be made based on the benefits the competing uses would provide to the public.

“We need to begin thinking about reallocation. Maybe the question should not be ‘must we deny this application because of the additional impacts it would cause?’ but ‘Should we reallocate from other uses to enable a use to occur?’ ” Flowers said. “The water management districts have been very reluctant to employ the authority they have

to declare applications to be competing and to go through this reallocation process.”

MacKay was elected lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket with Lawton Chiles in 1990. He lost a bid for the top office in 1998 to Republican Jeb Bush, but served briefly when Chiles died in December 1998.

During his time as lieutenant governor, MacKay worked on various water issues. Most notable was the sucking of water from Pasco County by Hillsborough and Pinellas counties in their competition for growth.

MacKay said parallels exist between that situation and the current effort to protect springs.

“I have seen this movie before. I know the plot and some of the players are even the same. You have a Senate committee and Associated Industries of Florida,” MacKay said. “You know something important is about to happen with this committee because AIF is leading the group who are now saying: A. We have enough government already, B. We’re not using the tools we already have (p.s. because we won’t let you) and C. We’re going to kick your fanny politically if you try to do anything.”

Subject: draft springs legislation: plan B

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Feb 21, 2014 9:10 am

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

The Florida Current

Senator says 'Plan B' is ready for critics of draft springs legislation
Bruce Ritchie, 02/20/2014 - 01:28 PM

Sen. David Simmons told a Senate workshop on Thursday that he has a new draft springs bill that will take out a section that has raised concerns for cities, counties and business groups.

The **Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation** held a two-hour workshop on a draft springs bill that would require septic tanks to be upgraded or hooked to sewers near springs with elevated nitrogen levels.

The bill, which would provide an estimated \$378 million from documentary stamp tax revenue, has support from environmental groups. But the **Florida League of Cities** and other groups have raised concerns that municipal utilities could get stuck with the cost if state funding is reduced in the future.

Simmons, R-Altamonte Springs and one of five Senate committee chairmen supporting the draft legislation, told the workshop audience that he has "Plan B" legislation ready to file that will take out a section that requires compliance with advanced treatment standards if cities and counties can't get funding.

The goal "is to ensure that local governments are not forced to do something where they don't have funding," Simmons said. "So that question has been answered by our Plan B."

Representatives of **Associated Industries of Florida**, the **Florida Chamber of Commerce** and the **Florida League of Cities** said it sounded like their concerns were being addressed.

"It sounds very much like Plan B is something we're going to be interested in working with you with," said **Ryan Matthews**, representing the Florida League of Cities. He said cities are concerned about having a reliable source of funding for improving wastewater treatment.

Simmons referred questions about the alternative draft legislation to committee staff. **Pepper Uchino**, committee staff director, said no alternative legislation had been written but he expects there to be legislation by a March 4 deadline for filing bills.

Former Department of Environmental Regulation Secretary **Jake Varn**, an attorney who has been involved in drafting the legislation, said separate zones may need to be established based on severity of threats to springs.

And he said some potential sources of nitrogen contamination in groundwater should be allowed variances if they can show they are not affecting springs.

"It should not be a one-size-fits-all approach," he said.

Asked whether the legislation is needed, **Drew Bartlett** of the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** said the legislation recognizes the programs that being used now to develop springs cleanup plans.

"The funding is a critical piece," Bartlett said. DEP already has a process for reviewing request for funding and ranking them.

Groups raising concerns at the workshop included the **Florida Association of Home Builders**, the **Florida Onsite Wastewater Association** and the **Coalition for Property Rights**.

Environmental groups expressing support included **Audubon Florida**, **1000 Friends of Florida**, the **Florida Wildlife Federation**, **The Nature Conservancy**, **Sierra Club Florida** and the **Florida Conservation Coalition**.

Robert L. Knight, director of the **Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute** in Gainesville, thanked senators for what he said is the "bold effort" towards springs protection that is represented by the draft legislation.

"I hope you won't water this down with anything that's going to make it less strong than it is," he said. "This draft bill provides a very strong foundation for the future."

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

Subject: Approach on springs bill moves from stick to carrot
From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Feb 21, 2014 9:04 am
To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>
Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

Approach on Florida springs bill moves from 'stick' to 'carrot'

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By Jim Turner, News Service of Florida

5:48 p.m. EST, February 20, 2014

TALLAHASSEE — A \$378.8 million measure to restore and protect Florida's natural springs is being revised to make it more appealing to local governments.

The measure being pushed by a bipartisan group of senators — and opposed by influential business groups — will be stripped of language that would have required local governments to help pay for work needed to improve the quality of water in springs restoration projects.

Instead, the local governments will be encouraged to participate, as refusal to contribute will result in further delays to long-sought springs projects.

Sen. [David Simmons](#), R-[Altamonte Springs](#), one of the architects of the measure, said the new language will say that a local government would only have to contribute based on their civic responsibility. The initial language in the draft of the bill was more of a "stick" that required local governments to pay for work identified by the state but not covered by the state, he said.

"We will use the carrot approach," Simmons said of the desire for local governments to help pay for restoration efforts.

Ryan Matthews, a lobbyist for the Florida League of Cities, said the change may ease local government objections to the springs proposal. "I think local government is always fearful they're going to get beaten with that stick," Matthews said.

Simmons has teamed on the proposal with Sens. [Charlie Dean](#), R-Inverness, [Alan Hays](#), R-Umatilla, Wilton Simpson, R-Trilby, and [Bill Montford](#), D-Tallahassee, who are each from regions with large numbers of springs.

The proposal requires local governments within the state's most-prominent springs zones to enact ordinances on fertilizer use; wastewater treatment plants to reduce the amount of nitrogen released in treated water; and farms and ranches to follow "best-management practices." Also, there is ban on new wastewater disposal systems, onsite sewage treatment systems and hazardous waste facilities within the springs zones.

The bill is expected to be introduced early next month.

Subject: Senate Looks to Make Springs Plan Easier to Swallow

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Feb 20, 2014 5:45 pm

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

SENATE LOOKS TO MAKE SPRINGS PLAN EASIER TO SWALLOW

By JIM TURNER
THE NEWS SERVICE OF FLORIDA

THE CAPITAL, TALLAHASSEE, February 20, 2014 A \$378.8 million measure to restore and protect Florida's natural springs is being revised to make it more appetizing for local governments.

The bill is expected to be formally introduced in the Senate by the first week of March.

The ambitious measure being pushed by a bipartisan group of senators --- and opposed by influential business groups --- will be stripped of language that would have required local governments to help fund work needed to improve the quality of water in springs-shed restoration projects.

Instead, the local governments will be encouraged to participate, as refusal to contribute will result in further delays to long-sought springs projects.

Sen. David Simmons, R-Altamonte Springs, one of the architects of the springs measure, said the new language will say that a local government would only have to contribute based on their civic responsibility.

The initial language in the draft of the bill was more of a "stick" that required local governments to pay for work identified by the state but not covered by the state, he said.

"We will use the carrot approach and of course the idea of moral suasion to do the right thing," Simmons said of the desire for local governments to help pay for restoration efforts.

Ryan Matthews, a lobbyist for the Florida League of Cities, said the change may ease local governments' objections to the springs proposal.

"I think local government is always fearful they're going to get beaten with that stick," Matthews said.

Simmons has teamed on the proposal with Sens. Charlie Dean, R-Inverness, Alan Hays, R-Umatilla, Wilton Simpson, R-Trilby, and Bill Montford, D-Tallahassee, who are each from regions with large numbers of springs.

The proposal requires local governments within the state's most-prominent springs zones to enact ordinances on fertilizer use; wastewater treatment plants to reduce the amount of nitrogen released in treated water; and agricultural operations to follow "best-management practices."

Also, there would be a ban in those springs zones on new wastewater disposal systems, onsite sewage treatment systems and hazardous waste facilities, while water-management districts would face new rules on issuing use permits for drawing water from springs and aquifers.

The proposal also would require the state and local governments to cover the cost of connecting residential properties to sewer systems where older septic systems are determined to be impacting area waters.

A septic-tank measure to protect springs was approved by lawmakers in 2010, but was repealed two years later after opponents argued the law would result in increased expenses for impacted homeowners.

"This is a blueprint for the future, it really is," Simmons said. "It's how to deal with every one of the water projects collaboratively and collectively for the whole state."

The draft of the springs legislation has the state Department of Environmental Protection-staffed Acquisition and Restoration Council ranking the conditions of the state's natural springs, from worst to best. The council would also determine the work needed to improve each spring-shed, estimate the required funding and recommend how much the state would be willing to pay

for the work using documentary-stamp tax revenues.

The doc stamps are fees already paid when real estate is sold.

The measure proposes setting aside about 20 percent of the money raised annually through the doc stamps for any work on the springs.

Simmons is confident that the proposal will get legislative support, although he expects the funding amount will not be as high as desired.

Gov. Rick Scott has proposed \$55 million next year for springs, a \$45 million increase from the current year.

Meanwhile, the overall proposal could be in for a fight as the House may not tackle new water-related policies during the legislative session that starts March 4. House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, is deferring water issues to Rep. Steve Crisafulli, R-Merritt Island, who has said he wants to make water a priority when he becomes speaker after this fall's elections.

Lobbyists for some of the state's leading business groups said they supported the intent of the measure, but continue to have reservations. Last month, nearly two dozen business groups, including the Association of Florida Community Developers, the Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical Association and the Florida Chamber of Commerce, wrote a letter indicating opposition to the plan.

They say the state should follow existing regulations regarding restoration efforts, while noting that water conditions should improve when new state-based water quality standards are allowed to be implemented from an agreement between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Sen. Jack Latvala, R-Clearwater, called the bill "light" on business impacts, and his impression is that the business groups' stance is that "regardless of whether you're part of the problem or not, you shouldn't have to pay for it, the state should have to pay for it."

David Childs, lobbying for the Florida Chamber of Commerce, replied that there are already provisions in law that require polluters to pay for the cleanup.

"When you fly out of town you'll fly out over one of the most advanced wastewater treatment plants that the city of Tallahassee paid for. If you're driving down I-75, you'll pass a major project involving the city of Gainesville and others to restore Paynes Prairie," Childs said. "There are plenty of examples where those that are responsible for issues have ponied up and have done good projects that are going to benefit the environment."

Subject: Water Rally Draws 200...

From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Feb 19, 2014 4:40 pm

To: WRWSA <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "<nsmith@wrwsa.org>" <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

Water rally draws 200 while speakers promote issue as bipartisan

Bruce Ritchie, 02/18/2014 - 04:04 PM



Rep. Heather Fitzenhagen, R-Fort Myers, speaks to a clean water rally on the steps of the historic Capitol on Tuesday. She said that all Floridians want clean water. Photo by Bruce Ritchie.

A rally for clean water at the Capitol drew more than 200 people on Tuesday while legislators speaking at the event described water as a bipartisan issue.

However, a House subcommittee chairman on Tuesday maintained that the Legislature has been dealing with water quality issues in recent years even as water is being described as a major issue for this legislative session, which starts March 4.

Some legislators expect an increased focus on water in the coming session. On Thursday, the **Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation** holds a workshop on draft springs legislation.

With dying manatees and dolphins in the Indian River Lagoon and slime covering Florida's springs last year, groups began collecting signatures for a "clean water declaration" to send a message to state leaders and the nation, **Frank Jackalone, Sierra Club** state field director, told the rally on the steps of the historic Capitol.

"Our declaration is not just for Florida," Jackalone said. "It is a declaration that is meant to be heard all over the country."

Rep. Alan Williams, D-Tallahassee, drew cheers at the rally when he said, "Let this be the year that protecting our waters in Florida is cool again."

Rep. Heather Fitzenhagen, R-Fort Myers, said she was one of the first to sign the declaration. Jackalone said she was the only Republican legislator to sign it.

"This is not a partisan issue, it's a bipartisan issue," Fitzenhagen said. "All Floridians want clean water."

Later in the day, after a meeting of the **House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee**, **Rep. Matt Caldwell**, R-Lehigh Acres and subcommittee chairman, said nobody is going to dispute that clean water is needed for agriculture, people and the environment.

"You have seen, I think, a very robust commitment from this Legislature over the past two decades to develop a policy framework to stop the environmental degradation," he said.

He cited state establishment of waterway pollution limits and cleanup plans, called "basin management action plans." Environmentalists fault the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** for weak pollution limits and cleanup plans that take too long while DEP says the plans weren't even developed for springs until 2012.

Draft Senate springs legislation would require homes in areas with springs that have high nitrogen levels to be hooked up to sewage treatment plants at no cost to the landowner. Caldwell said that proposal along with the nearly \$380 million a year would go toward hookups represents a "pretty big price tag."

"To go around and tell everyone they have to come off their septic system sounds like an easy fix but it is politically difficult," he said.

During the rally, former **Department of Community Affairs Secretary Tom Pelham** quoted [Article II, Section 7](#) of the **Florida Constitution** saying the state's policy to "conserve and protect its natural resources and scenic beauty."

And the Legislature, he said, is required by the Constitution to pass laws to protect those resources.

"The time to act is now," he said. "Delay will only make the situation worse and the solutions more costly."