

By the Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation;
and Senators Siplin and Lynn

592-03009-12

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to unclaimed deposits held by
3 utilities; amending s. 717.108, F.S.; requiring that
4 any unclaimed deposits held by a utility be
5 transferred to the Department of Economic Opportunity;
6 requiring that a specified portion of unclaimed
7 deposits be transferred to the Ecosystem Management
8 and Restoration Trust Fund in the Department of
9 Environmental Protection and used to improve the water
10 quality in Silver Springs; requiring that the
11 remaining balance of unclaimed deposits be transferred
12 to the Grants and Donations Trust Fund within the
13 Department of Economic Opportunity and used to assist
14 low-income households in meeting the costs of home
15 heating and cooling bills; providing an effective
16 date.

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18 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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20 Section 1. Section 717.108, Florida Statutes, is amended to
21 read:

22 717.108 Deposits held by utilities.—

23 (1) Any deposit, including any interest thereon, made by a
24 subscriber with a utility to secure payment or any sum paid in
25 advance for utility services to be furnished, less any lawful
26 charges, that remains unclaimed by the owner for more than 1
27 year after termination of the services for which the deposit or
28 advance payment was made is presumed unclaimed.

29 (2) The unclaimed utility deposits and funds presumed

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30 unclaimed shall be transferred to the Department of Economic
31 Opportunity.

32 Section 2. (1) The sum of \$500,000 from the unclaimed
33 utility deposits and funds presumed unclaimed pursuant to s.
34 717.108, Florida Statutes, shall be transferred from the
35 Department of Economic Opportunity to the Ecosystem Management
36 and Restoration Trust Fund of the Department of Environmental
37 Protection and shall be used for the purpose of improving water
38 quality in Silver Springs. These funds shall be directed to the
39 implementation of remediation actions that have the effect of
40 reducing nitrate loads to the spring. The department shall
41 coordinate with Marion County in identifying and selecting which
42 project has the greatest benefit based on estimated nitrate
43 reductions and consistency with the long-term plans of Marion
44 County.

45 (2) The remaining balance of the unclaimed deposits and
46 funds presumed unclaimed in the Department of Economic
47 Opportunity shall be transferred to the Grants and Donations
48 Trust Fund within the department and used to supplement the Low-
49 Income Home Energy Assistance Program for the purpose of
50 assisting low-income households in meeting the costs of home
51 heating and cooling bills. These funds shall be administered
52 through the same local provider agencies that presently
53 administer the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

54 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2012.