

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 573, Engrossed 1

2017 Legislature

1  
 2 An act relating to water protection and  
 3 sustainability; creating the "Heartland Headwaters  
 4 Protection and Sustainability Act"; creating s.  
 5 373.462, F.S.; providing legislative findings and  
 6 intent; creating s. 373.463, F.S.; requiring the Polk  
 7 Regional Water Cooperative to prepare an annual report  
 8 concerning water resource projects within a specified  
 9 area; specifying requirements for such report;  
 10 requiring the report to be submitted annually to the  
 11 Legislature, the Department of Environmental  
 12 Protection, and the appropriate water management  
 13 districts; requiring the inclusion of such report in  
 14 the appropriate consolidated water management district  
 15 annual report; providing an effective date.

16  
 17 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

18  
 19 Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Heartland  
 20 Headwaters Protection and Sustainability Act."

21 Section 2. Section 373.462, Florida Statutes, is created  
 22 to read:

23 373.462 Legislative findings and intent.—

24 (1) The Legislature recognizes that by law in 1979,  
 25 portions of Lake and Polk Counties were designated as the Green

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26 | Swamp Area of Critical State Concern in acknowledgment of its  
27 | regional and statewide importance in maintaining the quality and  
28 | quantity of Florida's water supply and water resources for the  
29 | public and the environment.

30 | (2) The Legislature also recognizes the Green Swamp, which  
31 | encompasses approximately 560,000 acres, is located in a  
32 | regionally significant high recharge area of the Floridan  
33 | Aquifer system, and it helps protect coastal communities from  
34 | saltwater intrusion.

35 | (3) The Legislature finds that the Green Swamp or Polk  
36 | County make up the headwaters or portions of the headwaters of  
37 | six major river systems in the state, which are the Alafia,  
38 | Hillsborough, Kissimmee, Ocklawaha, Peace, and Withlacoochee  
39 | Rivers. In addition, due to the area's unique topography and  
40 | geology which receives no other water inputs other than  
41 | rainfall, the area is essential in maintaining the  
42 | potentiometric head of the Floridan Aquifer system that directly  
43 | influences the aquifer's productivity for water supply.

44 | (4) The Legislature also finds that the Green Swamp and  
45 | the surrounding areas are economically, environmentally, and  
46 | socially defined by some of the most important and vulnerable  
47 | water resources in the state.

48 | (5) The Legislature recognizes that the Central Florida  
49 | Water Initiative Guiding Document dated January 30, 2015, and  
50 | the Southern Water Use Caution Area Recovery Strategy dated

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51 March 2006 recognized the fact that the surface water and  
 52 groundwater resources in the heartland counties of Hardee,  
 53 Highlands, and Polk are integral to the health, public safety,  
 54 and economic future of those regions.

55 (6) The Legislature declares that there is an important  
 56 state interest in partnering with regional water supply  
 57 authorities and local governments, in accordance with s.  
 58 373.705, to protect the water resources of the headwaters of the  
 59 Alafia, Hillsborough, Kissimmee, Ocklawaha, Peace, and  
 60 Withlacoochee Rivers and the surrounding areas. The Legislature  
 61 further declares that funding consideration be given to regional  
 62 collaborative solutions, including, but not limited to, the  
 63 heartland counties, to manage the water resources of the state.

64 Section 3. Section 373.463, Florida Statutes, is created  
 65 to read:

66 373.463 Heartland headwaters annual report.—

67 (1) The Polk Regional Water Cooperative, in coordination  
 68 with all of its member county and municipal governments, shall  
 69 prepare a comprehensive annual report for water resource  
 70 projects identified for state funding consideration within its  
 71 members' jurisdictions. The report must include, at a minimum:

72 (a) A list of projects identified by the cooperative for  
 73 state funding consideration for each of the following  
 74 categories. A project may be listed in more than one category.

75 1. Drinking water supply.

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- 76 |       2. Wastewater.
- 77 |       3. Stormwater and flood control.
- 78 |       4. Environmental restoration.
- 79 |       5. Conservation.

80 |       (b) A priority ranking for each listed project that will  
 81 | be ready to proceed in the upcoming fiscal year, identified by  
 82 | the categories specified in paragraph (a).

83 |       (c) The estimated cost of each listed project.

84 |       (d) The estimated completion date of each listed project.

85 |       (e) The source and amount of financial assistance to be  
 86 | provided by the cooperative, the member county or municipal  
 87 | governments, or other entities for each listed project.

88 |       (2) By December 1, 2017, and each year thereafter, the  
 89 | cooperative shall submit the comprehensive annual report to the  
 90 | Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House  
 91 | of Representatives, the department, and the appropriate water  
 92 | management districts.

93 |       (3) The cooperative shall also annually coordinate with  
 94 | the appropriate water management district to submit a status  
 95 | report on projects receiving priority state funding for  
 96 | inclusion in the consolidated water management district annual  
 97 | report required by s. 373.036(7).

98 |       Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.