

Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation

CS/CS/CS/HB 705 — Public Records/Water Management District Surplus Lands

by Government Accountability Committee; Oversight, Transparency, and Administration Subcommittee; Natural Resources and Public Lands Subcommittee; and Rep. Burgess (CS/SB 808 by Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee and Senator Baxley)

The bill creates a public records exemption for certain records related to the sale of surplus lands by a water management district (WMD). Specifically, the bill provides that the following information is confidential and exempt from the disclosure requirements:

- A written valuation of land determined to be surplus by the governing board of a water management district (WMD);
- Related documents used to form, or which pertain to the valuation; and
- Written offers to purchase such surplus lands.

The bill provides that the exemption expires two weeks before the contract or agreement regarding the purchase, exchange, or disposal of the surplus land is first considered for approval by the WMD. Additionally, the bill authorizes a WMD to disclose the records before the exemption expires to potential purchasers to facilitate or expedite closure of the land sale:

- During the negotiations for the sale or exchange of the land;
- During the marketing effort or bidding process associated with the sale, disposal, or exchange of the land;
- When the passage of time has made the conclusions of value invalid; or
- When negotiations or marketing efforts concerning the land are concluded.

In accordance with the Open Government Sunset Review Act, the exemption automatically repeals on October 2, 2023, unless the Legislature reviews and saves the exemption from repeal before that date.

The bill provides a statement of public necessity as required by the Florida Constitution.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect on the same date that HB 703 or similar legislation takes effect, if such legislation is adopted in the same legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes a law.

Vote: Senate 37-1; House 114-0