Florida House of Representatives - 2000

CS/CS/HB 951

By the Committees on General Government Appropriations, Environmental Protection and Representatives Dockery, Melvin and Suarez

1	A bill to be entitled
2	An act relating to the Green Swamp Area of
3	Critical State Concern; amending s. 380.0677,
4	F.S.; creating the Green Swamp Land Protection
5	Initiative as successor to the Green Swamp Land
6	Authority; providing mission; providing powers
7	of the Division of State Lands of the
8	Department of Environmental Protection;
9	providing for negotiation of conservation
10	easements for land protection; requiring
11	development of an acquisition work plan;
12	providing factors for selection of properties;
13	providing for an annual list of proposed
14	acquisitions; directing the division to develop
15	a conservation easement program; providing
16	rulemaking authority; providing for
17	coordination and assistance of the Florida
18	Communities Trust Program within the Department
19	of Community Affairs, the Boards of County
20	Commissioners for Polk and Lake Counties, the
21	Southwest Florida Water Management District,
22	and the St. Johns River Water Management
23	District; providing for ownership of rights and
24	interests conveyed through land protection
25	agreements and conservation easements;
26	providing for use of property conveyed;
27	deleting powers and duties of the Green Swamp
28	Land Authority; deleting provisions relating to
29	land protection agreements, termination of such
30	agreements, and availability and reversion of
31	certain appropriated funds; providing reporting
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1 and staffing requirements; amending ss. 2 259.041, 259.101, 259.105, and 380.507, F.S.; 3 providing conforming language and cross references; providing for vesting of title to 4 5 certain lands under the Florida Preservation 2000 Act; providing an effective date. б 7 8 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida: 9 10 Section 1. Section 380.0677, Florida Statutes, is 11 amended to read: 380.0677 Green Swamp Land Protection Initiative 12 13 Authority.--(1) CREATION; INTENT.--There is hereby created the 14 Green Swamp Land Protection Initiative Authority. The Green 15 16 Swamp Land Protection Initiative is to proceed as the 17 successor in interest to the Green Swamp Land Authority and shall not unlawfully affect the terms of pending land 18 19 protection agreements, easements, or other contracts 20 previously entered into under this section. (2) MISSION.--The mission of the Green Swamp Land 21 22 Protection Initiative Authority shall be to balance the protection of the ecological values of the Green Swamp Area of 23 24 Critical State Concern with the protection of private property 25 rights and the interests of taxpayers through the acquisition 26 of lands, or rights or interests in lands, from willing 27 sellers within the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern. 28 To that end, the authority is encouraged to coordinate with 29 the Division of State Lands of the Department of Environmental Protection is encouraged to coordinate with, the Florida 30 31 Communities Trust Program within the Department of Community

Affairs, the Boards of County Commissioners for Polk and Lake 1 2 Counties, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and 3 the St. Johns River Water Management District to identify, select, and acquire less-than-fee-simple interests or rights 4 5 in parcels within the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, as part of overall land acquisition efforts by the 6 7 state and the districts. When the Department of Environmental 8 Protection and the water management districts are planning to acquire parcels within the Green Swamp Area of Critical State 9 Concern, they shall consider acquiring such parcels using 10 11 alternatives to fee simple techniques in consultation with the 12 land authority. 13 (3) POWERS; BUDGET; GOVERNOR'S APPROVAL OF PROPOSED 14 ACQUISITIONS. -- The Green Swamp Land Authority shall have all the powers pursuant to s. 380.0666, except that it may not 15 16 issue bonds and must annually submit its budget to the Governor and the Legislature for review. In addition, the 17 authority must annually submit a list of proposed acquisitions 18 19 to the Governor for review and approval. The Governor may 20 remove proposed acquisitions from the list, with cause, if the 21 Governor determines such acquisitions would not further the 22 mission of the authority. By September 5 of the fiscal year in which the authority's budget is submitted, the chairpersons of 23 the appropriations committees of the Senate and the House of 24 25 Representatives may transmit to the Governor and the authority 26 comments on and objections to the proposed budget. The 27 Governor shall respond in writing to the comments and 28 objections. 29 (3) (4) APPLICATION FOR CONSERVATION EASEMENT LAND PROTECTION AGREEMENT; LIST OF PROPOSED ACQUISITIONS. -- Owners 30 of agricultural and other property within the Green Swamp Area 31 3

of Critical State Concern may shall have 3 years from the 1 2 effective date of the land authority's rules to apply to the 3 Division of State Lands land authority concerning their interest in signing a conservation easement. A conservation 4 5 easement land protection agreement restricting some or all of б their rights to their land. A land protection agreement is a 7 voluntarily negotiated instrument which may provide 8 compensation to a landowner in return for an undivided perpetual interest in real property the willingness of the 9 landowner to accept restrictions or conditions on the use of 10 the parcel of land, including the right to develop the land as 11 defined in s. 380.04, and may be created or stated in the form 12 13 of an easement in any deed, will, or other instrument executed 14 by or on the behalf of the owner of the property and subject 15 to the provisions in s. 704.06. The conservation easement agreement shall include provisions for compliance and shall be 16 recorded and indexed in the same manner as any other 17 instrument affecting the title to real property. A 18 19 conservation easement land protection agreement signed by the 20 fee simple owner does not confer with it the right of public access to the real property, unless public access is a right 21 22 specified within the easement agreement. Selected applicants' properties shall be ranked on the authority's list of proposed 23 24 acquisitions. Work shall continue on listed projects for which 25 acquisition has begun but not closed within the 3-year period, 26 until the acquisition is successfully completed. During the 27 time the property remains on the authority's list of proposed 28 acquisitions, and for 2 years thereafter, the property owner 29 may not change the current use of the property. 30 (4)(5) ACQUISITION WORK PLAN SELECTION; CRITERIA.--The Division of State Lands, with the Florida Communities Trust 31 4

Program within the Department of Community Affairs, the Boards 1 2 of County Commissioners for Polk and Lake Counties, the 3 Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the St. Johns River Water Management District, authority shall develop a 4 5 work plan to identify procedure for competitive selection of б properties appropriate for conservation easements land 7 protection agreements. Selection of properties to be included 8 in the work plan <del>criteria</del> shall be based primarily on the 9 water resource and ecological and environmental resource values of the parcels. Other factors may include the threat of 10 11 impending development, and the historical significance of the property, or other factors determined to be relevant by the 12 13 division, in consultation with the Florida Communities Trust 14 Program within the Department of Community Affairs, the Boards of County Commissioners for Polk and Lake Counties, the 15 16 Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the St. Johns 17 River Water Management District authority. Conservation easements land protection agreements shall be voluntary. The 18 19 price paid for an interest in land or restricting the rights 20 or interests in land shall not exceed the appraised value of those rights or interests. The selected properties shall 21 22 constitute a list of proposed acquisitions, to be updated at 23 least annually. 24 (5)(6) PROGRAM; CONSIDERATION. -- The Division of State 25 Lands authority, with the assistance of the Florida 26 Communities Trust Program within the Department of Community 27 Affairs, the Boards of County Commissioners for Polk and Lake 28 Counties, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and 29 the St. Johns River Water Management District Districts, shall develop a conservation easement land protection agreement 30 31 program, including procedures for selecting, valuing, and 5

monitoring to ensure compliance with the purposes of this 1 2 section within the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern. 3 The Division of State Lands shall Southwest Florida and St. Johns River Water Management Districts may act as the 4 acquisition agent agents for the initiative land authority, 5 and title to the lands, or interests or rights in lands 6 7 acquired pursuant to this section, shall vest in the Board of 8 Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund. The board of trustees shall hold title to land protection agreements and 9 conservation easements that were or will be acquired pursuant 10 to this section. The Southwest Florida Water Management 11 12 District and the St. Johns River Water Management District 13 shall monitor such agreements and easements, within their 14 respective districts, until the state assumes this responsibility district where the acquisition project is 15 16 located. Among the procedures shall be a process for determining the amount of consideration that may be paid in 17 exchange for an undivided perpetual interest in the real 18 19 property or a restriction on interest in the real property for 20 the willingness of a property owner to accept restrictions or conditions according to the terms of a land protection 21 22 agreement. The division may adopt authority shall make rules necessary to govern the conservation easement application 23 24 process, implement the conservation easements, implement a work plan, and implement the conservation easement program, 25 26 along with other rules related to this section that are 27 necessary to carry out this section. To encourage 28 participation in the land protection agreement program and to create a sense of fairness, the land authority is directed in 29 making rules to reflect changes in land values as a result of 30 31 the designation of the Green Swamp Area of Critical State 6

Concern and implementation of Polk and Lake Counties'
 comprehensive plans. Such rules shall be reviewed by the
 Southwest Florida and St. Johns River Water Management
 Districts.

5 (6) (7) APPROPRIATIONS. -- From funds appropriated to the Department of Environmental Protection for land acquisition 6 7 from the Conservation and Recreation Lands Trust Fund for fiscal years 1994-1995, 1995-1996, and 1996-1997, \$4 million 8 shall be reserved each fiscal year to carry out the purposes 9 of this section. To the extent practicable, moneys 10 11 appropriated from the Conservation and Recreation Lands Trust Fund, Save Our Rivers Trust Fund, and Florida Communities 12 13 Trust Fund shall be used to acquire lands, or interests or rights in lands, on the Conservation and Recreation Lands, 14 Save Our Rivers, or Florida Communities Trust land acquisition 15 16 plans or lists, as defined in s. 259.035, or a land acquisition plan under s. 373.59 or s. 380.508. However, 17 nothing in this subsection prohibits the Division of State 18 19 Lands Green Swamp Land Authority from entering into 20 conservation easements land protection agreements with any 21 property owner whose property is not on any of such lists. 22 From sums appropriated to the Department of Environmental Protection from the Water Management District Lands Trust Fund 23 for fiscal years 1994-1995, 1995-1996, and 1996-1997, \$3 24 25 million shall be reserved each fiscal year to carry out the 26 purposes of this section. Such amounts as are used from the 27 Water Management District Lands Trust Fund shall be credited against the allocations as provided in s. 373.59 to the St. 28 29 Johns River Water Management District or the Southwest Florida Water Management District in proportion to the amount of lands 30 31 for which an interest was acquired, and shall not be required

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by a district for debt service payments or land management 1 2 purposes. From funds appropriated to the Department of 3 Community Affairs for the Florida Communities Trust Program from the Preservation 2000 Trust Fund for fiscal years 4 1994-1995 through 1999-2000, \$3 million shall be reserved each 5 fiscal year to carry out the purposes of this section. 6 7 Appropriations identified pursuant to this subsection shall 8 fund the acquisition of lands, or the interests or rights in lands, and related costs of acquisition. Such funds shall be 9 available for expenditure after the land authority has adopted 10 11 rules to begin its program. Funds reserved pursuant to this 12 subsection, for each of the referenced fiscal years, shall 13 remain available for the purposes specified in this subsection 14 for 24 months from the date on which such funds become available for disbursement. After such time has elapsed, any 15 funds which are not legally obligated for expenditure shall be 16 17 released for the lawful purposes for which they were otherwise 18 appropriated. 19 (7)(8) OWNERSHIP RIGHTS AND INTERESTS. -- Ownership of 20 any rights or interests which are conveyed through a 21 conservation easement land protection agreement shall vest in the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund. 22 The board of trustees shall hold title to land protection 23 24 agreements and conservation easements that were or will be 25 acquired pursuant to this section Southwest Florida Water 26 Management District or the St. Johns River Water Management 27 District, based on where the acquisition project is located. 28 The districts shall monitor such conservation easements and 29 the agreements under their respective jurisdictions to ensure compliance with the terms of the easements and agreements, 30 until the state assumes this responsibility, and shall provide 31 8

1 the county property appraiser, the county tax collector, and 2 the county manager with copies of <u>conservation easements and</u> 3 land protection agreements that specify the deed restrictions 4 on lands.

5 (8)(9) USE OF PROPERTY AGREEMENT. -- A private property owner who enters into a conservation easement land protection 6 7 agreement may use the property in any manner consistent with 8 the terms of the easement agreement. A conservation easement 9 that land protection agreement which limits the use of property to agriculture shall allow the owner to change from 10 11 one agricultural activity to another unless otherwise 12 prohibited by the provisions of the easement agreement. Unless 13 otherwise stated, easements agreements shall not prohibit the 14 construction or operation of: barns or other buildings necessary to agricultural activities, such as employment 15 16 housing; hunting and fishing camps; or a specified number of single-family residences solely for the use of the property 17 owner or the owner's family. 18

19 (10) TERMINATION OF LAND PROTECTION AGREEMENTS. -- A fee 20 simple owner of lands subject to a land protection agreement 21 may petition the governing board of the water management 22 district which holds title to the interests or rights in those lands to terminate the agreement. If the district finds that 23 ownership of a parcel of land or interests or rights in a 24 25 parcel of land acquired pursuant to this section is no longer 26 needed to protect the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, the district may dispose of the land, or interests or 27 28 rights in the land, according to procedures adopted pursuant to s. 373.089. 29 30 (9)(11) PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTED. -- Nothing in this section shall be construed to abrogate the constitutionally 31

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protected property rights of private property owners within 1 2 the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, whether or not 3 they choose to participate in the Green Swamp Land Protection 4 Initiative Authority's acquisition program. 5 (10) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS. -- The Department of б Environmental Protection is directed to submit a report on the 7 status of the Green Swamp land acquisition program to the 8 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the 9 House of Representatives prior to the 2001 and 2002 Regular 10 Legislative Sessions. The department shall include in these 11 reports any recommendations relating to the Green Swamp land 12 acquisition program. 13 (11) STAFFING REQUIREMENTS. -- The Division of State 14 Lands shall provide staff, resources, and support sufficient 15 to fulfill the mission of the Green Swamp Land Protection Initiative in an expeditious manner. The division shall 16 17 designate a coordinator for the initiative who shall physically travel to the Green Swamp Area of Critical State 18 19 Concern, on at least a quarterly basis, to provide assistance 20 and services to the area landowners. The division shall provide reasonable notice to the landowners of the 21 22 coordinator's visits, which shall include the time, date, and location of each visit. 23 24 Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (11) of section 25 259.041, Florida Statutes, is amended to read: 26 259.041 Acquisition of state-owned lands for 27 preservation, conservation, and recreation purposes. --28 (11)29 (b) All project applications shall identify, within their acquisition plans, those projects which require a full 30 31 fee simple interest to achieve the public policy goals, 10

together with the reasons full title is determined to be 1 2 necessary. The state agencies and the water management 3 districts may use alternatives to fee simple acquisition to bring the remaining projects in their acquisition plans under 4 5 public protection. For the purposes of this subsection, the б term "alternatives to fee simple acquisition" includes, but is 7 not limited to: purchase of development rights; obtaining 8 conservation easements; obtaining flowage easements; purchase of timber rights, mineral rights, or hunting rights; purchase 9 of agricultural interests or silvicultural interests; entering 10 into land protection agreements; entering into conservation 11 12 easements as defined in s. 380.0677(3)(5); fee simple 13 acquisitions with reservations; creating life estates; or any 14 other acquisition technique which achieves the public policy goals listed in paragraph (a). It is presumed that a private 15 16 landowner retains the full range of uses for all the rights or interests in the landowner's land which are not specifically 17 acquired by the public agency. The lands upon which hunting 18 19 rights are specifically acquired pursuant to this paragraph 20 shall be available for hunting in accordance with the 21 management plan or hunting regulations adopted by the Florida 22 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, unless the hunting rights are purchased specifically to protect activities on 23 adjacent lands. 24 25 Section 3. Subsection (3) of section 259.101, Florida 26 Statutes, is amended to read: 27 259.101 Florida Preservation 2000 Act.--28 (3) LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAMS SUPPLEMENTED.--Less the 29 costs of issuance, the costs of funding reserve accounts, and other costs with respect to the bonds, the proceeds of bonds 30 31 issued pursuant to this act shall be deposited into the

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Florida Preservation 2000 Trust Fund created by s. 375.045. 1 2 Ten percent of the proceeds of any bonds deposited into the 3 Preservation 2000 Trust Fund shall be distributed by the Department of Environmental Protection to the Department of 4 5 Environmental Protection for the purchase by the South Florida Water Management District of lands in Dade, Broward, and Palm 6 7 Beach Counties identified in s. 7, chapter 95-349, Laws of 8 Florida. This distribution shall apply for any bond issue for the 1995-1996 fiscal year. For the 1997-1998 fiscal year only, 9 \$20 million per year from the proceeds of any bonds deposited 10 into the Florida Preservation 2000 Trust Fund shall be 11 12 distributed by the Department of Environmental Protection to 13 the St. Johns Water Management District for the purchase of 14 lands necessary to restore Lake Apopka. The remaining proceeds shall be distributed by the Department of Environmental 15 16 Protection in the following manner:

17 (a) Fifty percent to the Department of Environmental
18 Protection for the purchase of public lands as described in s.
19 259.032. Of this 50 percent, at least one-fifth shall be used
20 for the acquisition of coastal lands.

21 (b) Thirty percent to the Department of Environmental 22 Protection for the purchase of water management lands pursuant to s. 373.59, to be distributed among the water management 23 districts as provided in that section. Funds received by each 24 district may also be used for acquisition of lands necessary 25 26 to implement surface water improvement and management plans 27 approved in accordance with s. 373.456 or for acquisition of 28 lands necessary to implement the Everglades Construction 29 Project authorized by s. 373.4592.

30 (c) Ten percent to the Department of Community Affairs31 to provide land acquisition grants and loans to local

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governments through the Florida Communities Trust pursuant to 1 2 part III of chapter 380. From funds allocated to the trust, 3 \$3 million annually shall be used by the Division of State Lands to implement the Green Swamp Land Protection Initiative 4 5 Green Swamp Land Authority or specifically for the purchase of conservation easements through land protection agreements, as 6 7 defined in s. 380.0677(3)<del>(5)</del>, of lands, or severable interests 8 or rights in lands, in the Green Swamp Area of Critical State 9 Concern. From funds allocated to the trust, \$3 million annually shall be used by the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan 10 11 Land Authority specifically for the purchase of any real property interest in either those lands subject to the Rate of 12 13 Growth Ordinances adopted by local governments in Monroe County or those lands within the boundary of an approved 14 Conservation and Recreation Lands project located within the 15 16 Florida Keys or Key West Areas of Critical State Concern; however, title to lands acquired within the boundary of an 17 approved Conservation and Recreation Lands project may, in 18 accordance with an approved joint acquisition agreement, vest 19 20 in the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund. Of the remaining funds allocated to the trust after the 21 above transfers occur, one-half shall be matched by local 22 governments on a dollar-for-dollar basis. To the extent 23 allowed by federal requirements for the use of bond proceeds, 24 25 the trust shall expend Preservation 2000 funds to carry out 26 the purposes of part III of chapter 380. 27 (d) Two and nine-tenths percent to the Department of 28 Environmental Protection for the purchase of inholdings and 29 additions to state parks. For the purposes of this paragraph, "state park" means all real property in the state under the 30

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jurisdiction of the Division of Recreation and Parks of the
 department, or which may come under its jurisdiction.

3 (e) Two and nine-tenths percent to the Division of
4 Forestry of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
5 Services to fund the acquisition of state forest inholdings
6 and additions pursuant to s. 589.07.

7 (f) Two and nine-tenths percent to the <u>Fish and</u>
8 <u>Wildlife Conservation</u> Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission to
9 fund the acquisition of inholdings and additions to lands
10 managed by the commission which are important to the
11 conservation of fish and wildlife.

(g) One and three-tenths percent to the Department of Environmental Protection for the Florida Greenways and Trails Program, to acquire greenways and trails or greenways and trails systems pursuant to chapter 260, including, but not limited to, abandoned railroad rights-of-way and the Florida National Scenic Trail.

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19 Local governments may use federal grants or loans, private 20 donations, or environmental mitigation funds, including 21 environmental mitigation funds required pursuant to s. 22 338.250, for any part or all of any local match required for the purposes described in this subsection. Bond proceeds 23 allocated pursuant to paragraph (c) may be used to purchase 24 lands on the priority lists developed pursuant to s. 259.035. 25 26 Title to lands purchased pursuant to paragraphs (a), (d), (e), 27 (f), and (g) shall be vested in the Board of Trustees of the 28 Internal Improvement Trust Fund., except that title to lands, 29 or rights or interests therein, acquired by either the Southwest Florida Water Management District or the St. Johns 30 River Water Management District in furtherance of the Green 31

1 Swamp Land Authority's mission pursuant to s. 380.0677(3), 2 shall be vested in the district where the acquisition project 3 is located. Title to lands purchased pursuant to paragraph (c) may be vested in the Board of Trustees of the Internal 4 5 Improvement Trust Fund. The board of trustees shall hold title б to land protection agreements and conservation easements that 7 were or will be acquired pursuant to s. 380.0677, and, except 8 that title to lands, or rights or interests therein, acquired 9 by either the Southwest Florida Water Management District and or the St. Johns River Water Management District shall monitor 10 such agreements and easements, within their respective 11 12 districts, until the state assumes this responsibility in 13 furtherance of the Green Swamp Land Authority's mission 14 pursuant to s. 380.0677(3), shall be vested in the district where the acquisition project is located. This subsection is 15 16 repealed effective October 1, 2000. Prior to repeal, the 17 Legislature shall review the provisions scheduled for repeal and shall determine whether to reenact or modify the 18 provisions or to take no action. 19 20 Section 4. Paragraph (k) of subsection (9) of section 259.105, Florida Statutes, is amended to read: 21 259.105 The Florida Forever Act.--22 (9) The Acquisition and Restoration Council shall 23 develop a rule to competitively evaluate, select, and rank 24 25 projects eligible for Florida Forever funds pursuant to 26 paragraph (3)(b). In developing this rule the Acquisition and 27 Restoration Council shall give weight to the following 28 criteria: 29 The project may be acquired, in whole or in part, (k) using alternatives to fee simple, including but not limited 30 31 to, purchase of development rights, hunting rights, 15

agricultural or silvicultural rights, or mineral rights; or
 obtaining conservation easements or flowage easements; or use
 of land protection agreements as defined in s. 380.0677(5).

4 Section 5. Subsection (11) of section 380.507, Florida5 Statutes, is amended to read:

6 380.507 Powers of the trust.--The trust shall have all 7 the powers necessary or convenient to carry out the purposes 8 and provisions of this part, including:

9 (11) To make rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this part and to exercise any power granted in this part, 10 11 pursuant to the provisions of chapter 120. The trust shall 12 adopt rules governing the acquisition of lands by local 13 governments or the trust using proceeds from the Preservation 14 2000 Trust Fund and the Florida Forever Trust Fund, consistent with the intent expressed in the Florida Forever Act. Such 15 16 rules must include, but are not limited to, procedures for appraisals and confidentiality consistent with ss. 17 125.355(1)(a) and (b) and 166.045(1)(a) and (b), a method of 18 determining a maximum purchase price, and procedures to assure 19 20 that the land is acquired in a voluntarily negotiated transaction, surveyed, conveyed with marketable title, and 21 22 examined for hazardous materials contamination. Land acquisition procedures of a local land authority or a land 23 protection initiative created pursuant to s. 380.0663 or s. 24 380.0677 may be used for the land acquisition programs 25 26 described by ss. 259.101(3)(c) and 259.105 if within areas of 27 critical state concern designated pursuant to s. 380.05, 28 subject to approval of the trust. 29 Section 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a 30 law. 31