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A bill to be entitled
 An act relating to water management; creating
 the Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration
 Council; providing for membership, powers, and
 duties; providing for separate county task
 forces; providing for a report to the
 Legislature; providing for an advisory group to
 the council; requiring the Southwest Florida
 Water Management District to act as lead entity
 for the purpose of providing staff and
 administrative support for the council;
 providing for a Citrus/Hernando Waterways
 restoration program; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the waterways of Citrus and Hernando Counties
 are of historic, hydrological, and ecological significance,
 and

WHEREAS, most of these Citrus/Hernando waterways are
 Outstanding Florida Waterways or are in the application process,
 and

WHEREAS, the Citrus/Hernando waterways are plagued by
 fluctuating water levels and sedimentation increasing nitrate
 levels and sand movement causing blockage of natural springs
 and excessive growth of aquatic plants, which are degrading
 their water quality and recreational value, and

WHEREAS, despite their current problems, the
 Citrus/Hernando waterways continue to provide wildlife habitat
 for fish, birds, and game and offer recreational opportunities
 for the residents of Citrus and Hernando Counties and visitors
 to the area, and



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31 WHEREAS, the renewable economic potential of the
32 Citrus/Hernando waterways is significant, and

33 WHEREAS, the Southwest Florida Water Management
34 District and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,
35 along with other state, regional, and local entities, have
36 developed proposals to restore portions of the Citrus/Hernando
37 waterways, NOW, THEREFORE,

38
39 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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41 Section 1. (1) The Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration
42 Council.--There is created within the Withlacoochee and Coastal
43 Rivers Basin Boards of the Southwest Florida Water Management
44 District a council to be known as the Citrus/Hernando Waterways
45 Restoration Council. The council shall be coordinated by
46 representatives of the following agencies: the Florida Fish and
47 Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Department of
48 Environmental Protection, and the Southwest Florida Water
49 Management District. The council is subject to the provisions of
50 chapters 119 and 120, Florida Statutes.

51 (2) Members of the council shall consist of 12 voting
52 members with 6 appointed by the President of the Senate and 6
53 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The
54 council shall consist of representatives as follows:

55 (a) A waterfront property owner from each county.

56 (b) An attorney from each county.

57 (c) A member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber
58 of Commerce from each county.

59 (d) An environmental engineer from each county.

60 (e) An engineer from each county.



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61 (f) A person from each county with training in biology
 62 or another scientific discipline.

63 (3) The council members from each county are to form
 64 two separate county task forces from the council to review and
 65 make recommendations on specific waterways. The Hernando
 66 County Task Force shall develop plans for the restoration of
 67 the Weeki Wachee River and Springs. The Citrus County Task
 68 Force shall develop plans for the restoration of the
 69 Tsala-Apopka Chain of Lakes.

70 (4) There shall be a technical advisory group to the
 71 council and the two county task forces which shall consist of
 72 one representative each from the Southwest Florida Water
 73 Management District, the Department of Environmental
 74 Protection, the Department of Transportation, the Fish and
 75 Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Coastal Rivers Basin
 76 Board, the Withlacoochee River Basin Board, and the United
 77 States Army Corps of Engineers, each of whom shall be
 78 appointed by his or her respective agency and each of whom,
 79 with the exception of the representatives from the
 80 Withlacoochee River Basin Board and Coastal Rivers Basin
 81 Board, shall have had training in biology or another
 82 scientific discipline.

83 (5) Immediately after appointment, the council shall
 84 meet and organize by electing a chair, a vice chair, and a
 85 secretary, whose terms shall be for 2 years each. Council
 86 officers shall not serve consecutive terms. Each council
 87 member shall be a voting member. Additionally, the two county
 88 task forces shall elect a chair and a secretary, whose terms
 89 shall be for 2 years each.

90 (6) The council or the county task forces shall meet



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91 at the call of their respective chairs, at the request of six
92 members of the council or of the respective task force, or at
93 the request of the chair of the governing board of the Southwest
94 Florida Water Management District.

95 (7) The council shall have the powers and duties to:

96 (a) Review audits and all data specifically related to
97 lake and river restoration techniques and sport fish
98 population recovery strategies, including data and strategies
99 for shoreline restoration, sand and other sediment control and
100 removal, exotic species management, floating tussock
101 management or removal, navigation, water quality, and fish and
102 wildlife habitat improvement, particularly as they may apply
103 to the Citrus/Hernando waterways.

104 (b) Evaluate whether additional studies are needed.

105 (c) Explore all possible sources of funding to conduct
106 the restoration activities.

107 (d) Report to the Speaker of the House of
108 Representatives and the President of the Senate before
109 November 25 of each year on the progress of the
110 Citrus/Hernando Waterways restoration program and any
111 recommendations for the next fiscal year.

112 (8) The Southwest Florida Water Management District
113 shall act as lead entity for the purpose of providing staff
114 and administrative support to assist the council in carrying
115 out the provisions of this act.

116 (9) Members of the council shall receive no
117 compensation for their services but are entitled to be
118 reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses incurred during
119 execution of their official duties as provided in section
120 112.061, Florida Statutes. State and federal agencies shall be



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121 responsible for the per diem and travel expenses of their
 122 respective appointees to the council, and the Southwest
 123 Florida Water Management District shall be responsible for per
 124 diem and travel expenses of other appointees to the council.

125 Section 2. The Citrus/Hernando Waterways restoration
 126 program.--

127 (1) The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and
 128 the Southwest Florida Water Management District, in
 129 conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection,
 130 pertinent local governments, and the Citrus/Hernando Waterways
 131 Restoration Council, shall review existing restoration
 132 proposals to determine which ones are the most environmentally
 133 sound and economically feasible methods of improving the fish
 134 and wildlife habitat and natural systems of the
 135 Citrus/Hernando waterways.

136 (2) To initiate the Citrus/Hernando Waterways
 137 restoration program recommended by the Citrus/Hernando
 138 Waterways Restoration Council, the Fish and Wildlife
 139 Conservation Commission, with assistance from the Southwest
 140 Florida Water Management District and in consultation and by
 141 agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection and
 142 pertinent local governments, shall develop tasks to be
 143 considered by those entities for the enhancement of fish and
 144 wildlife habitat. These tasks shall include the following:

145 (a) An evaluation of different methodologies for
 146 removing the extensive tussocks and buildup of organic matter
 147 along the shoreline and of the aquatic vegetation in the lake.

148 (b) The conduct of any additional studies as required
 149 by the Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council.

150 (3) Contingent on the Legislature's appropriating



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151 funds for the Citrus/Hernando Waterways restoration program
152 and in conjunction with financial participation by federal,
153 other state, and local governments, the appropriate agencies
154 shall, through competitive bid, award contracts to implement
155 the activities of the Citrus/Hernando Waterways restoration
156 program.

157 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.